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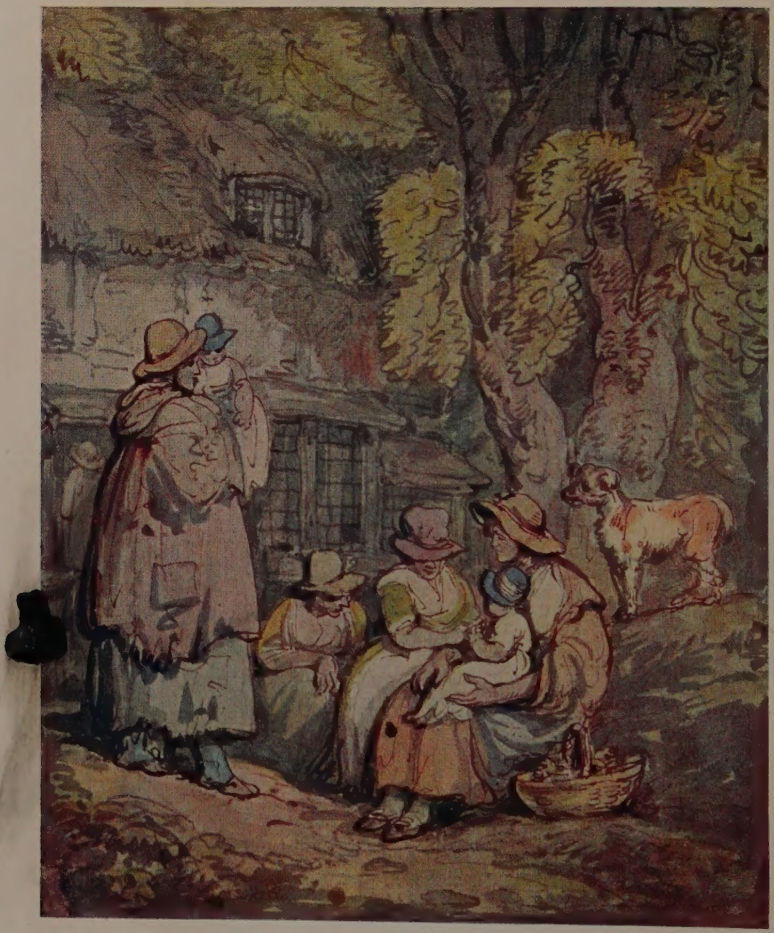

THOMAS ROWLANDSON.

THE COTTAGE DOOR.

CHATS ON OLD ENGLISH DRAWINGS

BY

RANDALL DAVIES

WITH 45 ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

EVERY artist makes drawings. These may be, on the one hand, merely exercises, notes, or scribbles which are, or might better be, destroyed as soon as done with; or, on the other hand, something in the nature of a dress rehearsal for the public performance. Between these two extremes are all sorts of sketches, studies, and records which, although never intended for exhibition as finished works, are yet of such value and interest as expressions of the artist's method or feeling as to be well worth preserving from destruction. "At one end of the scale," as Sir Sidney Colvin puts it in his preface to Mr. Laurence Binyon's catalogue of the English drawings at the British Museum, "the interest is one purely of record, curiosity, and research . . . at the other end it is the interest of fine art in some of its purest forms. But between these two extremes there is, in a collection like the present, no sharp line of division to be drawn."

In the phrase "a collection like the present," Sir Sidney Colvin refers, of course, to the English drawings preserved at the British Museum. But let us use it in another sense, namely, as the formation of a collection of "old English drawings," and the study of them which is ancillary to the process, and see what it implies. For various

reasons it is a process and a study that lies somewhat apart, and it has, until quite lately, been so little practised that one is often asked "What do you mean by old English drawings? What sort of drawings?"

It is obvious that each of the three words composing the subject of our title is susceptible of more than one meaning; and it may therefore be as well to state which of those meanings it is proposed to attach to them for our present purpose, and to define as nearly as may be the limits of those meanings which, again, are capable of considerable variation.

First, then, as to what is to be considered as "old," in speaking of English drawings, it is necessary to fix some sort of a limit to either end of the period under review, as it is hardly possible to draw a hard and fast line. The latter half of the eighteenth century, it may be stated at once, is the period to which the great majority belong. Before that, however, although there was hardly a regular English school of painting or drawing, there were many notable artists working who were of English birth, the earliest of whom take us back to the latter years of the reign of Elizabeth. Before that date, again, there were only foreign painters in England; and only one of them, Hans Holbein, who is known to have left any drawings. It is impossible to omit Holbein, but with that exception we may say that our period commences with the seventeenth century—the earliest example, as we shall see, being a landscape drawing by Inigo Jones done in 1604.

As to where it ends, we have no such precise

date to guide us, inasmuch as the number of artists working at the opening of the nineteenth century was very large, and the traditions of the "old" school lingered on with greater or less force as one or another artist survived and was active for a longer or shorter number of years. For example, Turner and Girtin, were both born in 1775, and Cotman, Cox and De Wint in 1782–4. All were bred in the eighteenth century tradition of "old drawings," and Girtin died in it, aged only 27. But the others survived (Turner till 1851 and Cox till 1859), and it is hardly possible to call their later work "old." The best way, it has seemed to me, is to invoke the four Georges for a rough and ready date, 1820, as final, but not to treat it as more than a rough and ready one. There were so many artists that it is quite impossible to mention them all, and as there was no definite break in their succession, or in the manner of their work, it is not necessary to fix one. In another volume I should like to consider "Drawings of the Victorian Period," the beginning of which might be stretched a little to dovetail into the end of this one.

With regard to which is "English," I think it will be allowed that a good precedent was established by Horace Walpole, when he called his book *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, for regarding as "English" any drawings done in England, even by foreign artists who settled in this country and found their subjects in it. In his preface Walpole excuses himself for not calling his work "The Lives of the English Painters," by saying that in truth this country had very

rarely given birth to a genius in that profession. Though Time has filled that chasm in the path of writers on English art, it may still be objected that the inclusion of Holbein, Van Dyck, Lely or Kneller in a book on old English drawings is not altogether warrantable. Exception would hardly be taken nowadays to the names of Copley and West ; or of Fuseli, Bartolozzi and Kauffmann —though there is still a lingering doubt as to Whistler, Abbey, and Mr. John Sargent. However that may be, I propose to extend the precedent established by Walpole so as to include as English drawings any that were done in England by foreign artists who settled here, and also, of course, the work of English artists when travelling in foreign countries. After all, the British school of painting and drawing has no greater claims to be considered exclusively indigenous than, say, the British Flora ; and a book on English gardens that had not something to say of mignonette, aster, chrysanthemum or geranium would hardly be considered complete. With art the inclusion of exotics is still more necessary, as it is not only the extant works of a foreign artist that count, but, when he settled in England and spent the rest of his life working there, his influence. For example, Kneller's arrival in England was hardly of less consequence to its art than that of George I. to its politics. For good or evil, the chances and changes of the seventeenth century were succeeded by a more solid and continuous course of things which, however slow and dull, ultimately resulted in the establishment of the Royal Academy of Arts and a very numerous, varied and yet always vigorous school. Kneller's

influence was, perhaps, exceptional, and certainly, in his time, baneful. But if we take the principal foreigners whose works we shall have occasion to include in the present volume, we shall find first that their influence was for good, and, second, that as the native talent developed, both in strength and in numbers, the foreigners recede. In the early sixteenth century we have Holbein, alone. In the reign of Elizabeth many foreign portrait painters, but already our miniaturists Isaac Oliver and Nicholas Hilliard have appeared. Under the Stuarts, Van Dyck, Lely and Hollar loom large, but there were also some Englishmen whom they did not entirely overshadow—Dobson, Cooper, Barlow and others to whom a little more research may restore due credit. Before 1750, though Kneller reigned supreme, we had Hogarth, Richardson, and Thornhill; and Reynolds, Gainsborough and Wilson were coming on. To the Frenchmen Gravelot and Grignon we certainly owe a debt of gratitude for their refining influence on the rough British practitioners of the minor arts, and to the former, perhaps, something of the peculiar charm of Gainsborough. To the Florentines Cipriani and Bartolozzi I consider that we owe still more, for the same reason; even if their influence, because it was so widespread, helped to exaggerate the weakness of artists who would without it have been no stronger, and certainly less endurable. Latest of all, in our period, came Henry Fuseli, from Switzerland, and though his eccentricities excited some heated criticism,[1] it is well

[1] See the passage quoted in my last chapter from Edward Dayes in 1804.

recognised that his work and teaching at the Academy were all for the good in succeeding years.

Let us now take a glance at these foreign influences from another point of view; namely, in relation to the three broad classes of subjects into which painting is usually divided—portraits, landscape, and history, the last including most of what is not covered by the other two. In England, there was practically no painting except portraits until nearly 1750; and very little of that by English painters that is worth talking about. But for a couple of centuries the soil had been prepared by the foreigners, and when at length were born three portrait painters like Gainsborough, Reynolds and Romney, no foreign influence was necessary for their development. Reynolds may have brightened up his plumes in Rome, and Gainsborough, as above suggested, probably benefited by the example of Gravelot. Romney was all himself. Not only had these three nothing to gain from foreign influence, but also they, and their successors, had nothing to fear. Zoffany was an exotic, with a peculiar gift for rendering groups of figures, and Hoppner, under circumstances most favourable to himself, was only temporarily the rival of Lawrence.

Next, as to landscape. It may safely be said that no foreign artist working in England ever influenced English landscape painting to any perceptible degree. It has been said that Van Dyck made sketches in water-colour of English landscape; but even if he did, there is no evidence that his practice was followed. Richard Wilson is always mentioned as our earliest landscape painter, but

he never painted English landscape. George Barret was the next, and he came to London, in 1762, from Dublin. Gainsborough, Crome and Constable, were undoubtedly influenced by the work of the Dutch masters of the seventeenth century (which in their time were being brought into England in greater and greater numbers), but never by any living painter. So that in all our four chapters on landscape drawing we shall only find the name of one foreign artist, De Loutherbourg, and his work is so varied that he cannot be regarded as merely a landscape painter.

In "history," on the other hand, the case is almost exactly the reverse, and what is the result? Why, that in this respect the British school is the weakest. It is true that in the minor ways of drawing and engraving, this class of subject affords a very large and varied mass of material for the collector, which is both interesting and delightful. But in painting, either on canvas or for the decoration of buildings, the British school has produced little, if anything, which is comparable in quality with its portraits or landscapes. The inference to be drawn would seem to be that history was a class of painting which was unsuitable for development by the English genius, and that it never progressed further than a superficial response to foreign influence.

This, however, would hardly be correct if we are to include under "history" everything that was not portraiture or landscape, especially with regard to drawings, irrespective of paintings. For among the artists who seldom if ever painted in oils, we find men like Rowlandson and Blake,

and among the painters Thornhill and Hogarth, who were certainly "all British." But it is in this class, in the later years of the eighteenth century, that the influence of the foreigner is most discernible, and the inclusion of the names of Cipriani, Bartolozzi, Fuseli, and one or two others as the authors of "English" drawings is, I hope it will be allowed, not only justifiable, but to be regarded as an integral part of the subject.

Thirdly, as to what we mean by a "drawing." This is a little more complicated. The word is used in more than one sense. Its proper signification, for our purpose at all events, is, I feel sure, a sketch, study, or design, in contradistinction to a finished production. The French equivalent is *dessin*, and that is clearly something short of the completed work. With the drawings of painters, this signification is perfectly clear. But with artists who never used oil paints at all, it is sometimes very difficult to maintain. In the case of illustrations for books, in particular, the drawing is made for reproduction by the engraver, but it is often meticulously finished, and quite of a different nature from the spontaneous sketches or designs that in most cases preceded it. Again, take the case of Rowlandson, who made thousands of drawings with a pen, most of them coloured with water-colour, which were in some cases etched or engraved, but were nearly all of them sold as finished productions.

This brings us to another meaning with which the word is habitually used, namely of water-colours in contradistinction to oil paintings. It is true that the Victoria and Albert Museum still issues

a *Catalogue of Water-colour Paintings*, and that they are frequently alluded to in it as " pictures." It is equally true that the majority of old water-colours were intended for sale and exhibition, and that this intention was one of the principal factors in the establishment of the water-colour societies. Both these considerations are fatal to the inclusion of water-colours as " drawings " in the sense of works which are neither paintings nor the finished production. Nevertheless, until quite the end of the Georgian period the work of the water-colourists was essentially that of draughtsmen rather than of painters, so that these early " water-colours " are rightly regarded by collectors as drawings, and, I think, form the principal, if not the only, items in many modern collections.

I feel it necessary to emphasise these distinctions in order to make it quite clear that in the present volume water-colours only constitute a comparatively small part of the subject. The British School of Water-colours is so important, that it is a subject to which many volumes have been devoted, and I hope still more will follow; for the systematic study of its earlier history is still in its infancy. But on English drawings as a whole no volume at all has hitherto been published, and it is accordingly rather to " drawings " in the sense indicated in my opening paragraph that I propose to devote the following pages. So heavily have all other sorts of drawings been overshadowed by water-colours, that a preliminary glance may usefully be taken at the field before us before entering it

First, as to the materials employed; these include pencil; pen (in nearly all cases a reed pen filled with brownish ink); charcoal; black, white or red chalk used alone, or occasionally a combination of these and other coloured chalks. Wash—either indian ink, sepia, bistre, or water-colour—generally to fill pencil or pen outlines. Second, as to the subject; which, though of no import in relation to the artistic value of a drawing, is of such primary interest to the individual collector that I have not hesitated to make it the basis of my division of the present volume into chapters. I need, therefore, say no more of it here.

Third, as to the artists. Here is a list of a few of the best known, examples of whose drawings may be seen in our museums and galleries, and in most cases may be acquired by collectors, with a moderate backing of cash, luck and perseverance: Bartolozzi, Blake, Cipriani, Constable, Cosway, Cotman, Cox, Cozens, Crome, De Wint, Flaxman, Fuseli, Gainsborough, Hogarth, Holbein, Hollar, Hoppner, Kneller, Lely, Reynolds, Romney, Rowlandson, Sandby, Stothard, Turner, Van Dyck, Wheatley, Wilson.

Now these are names that might dignify the catalogue of any public gallery in the world; but I am not suggesting that the finished works of all of them are within reach of the collector, or even the most important of their drawings and sketches. But the greater an artist is, the less of his work suffices to show his greatness—or in other words, to put it plainly, a mere outline by Leonardo or Durer would always fetch more money than a finished work by Sandby or Stothard.

Moreover, the smaller an artist is, the better are often his spontaneous beginnings than his laboured completions, and further, it has been well recognised that whether the artist be great or small, or in between, his drawings often have qualities that are lacking in his finished productions.

In his Eleventh *Discourse*, Sir Joshua Reynolds says " Those who are not conversant in works of art are often surprised at the high value set by connoisseurs on drawings which appear very careless, and in every respect unfinished ; but they are truly valuable ; and their value arises from this, that they give the idea of a whole ; and this whole is often expressed by a dexterous facility which indicates the true power of a painter, even though roughly exerted : whether it consists in the general composition, or the general form of each figure or the turn of the attitude which bestows grace and elegance. . . . On whatever account we value these drawings, it is certainly not for high finishing, or a minute attention to particulars."

Sir Joshua, no doubt, had in his mind the collections of the early Italian Masters' drawings and much the same thing is said of them by Henry Reveley in his *Notices of Drawings*, published in 1812. But there is no reason to suppose that those who *are* " conversant in works of art " have altered that opinion in recent times : as an example I may quote from the late Alfred Rich's book, *Water-colour Painting*. " The picture that is here reproduced (by Peter de Wint) of Bray-on-the-Thames," he writes, " that is sometimes referred to as the sketch or study for the finished work, is very fine indeed, and lacks nothing in either detail or

finish to make it so. The larger picture which was based on this sketch, on the other hand, is crowded with an over-careful elaboration that robs it of its soul; the very quality that is so evident in the smaller and less finished drawing. . . . The point I wish to impress is that the original sketch is a fine emotional work of art, and the larger and more highly finished picture is spoilt by over-elaboration. Yet one more word about these two drawings. I fully believe that De Wint did the finished one in order to gratify a rich and ignorant buyer, and that in his innermost mind he knew which was the real achievement, and which posterity would give him credit for."

Another passage from Mr. Rich's book is to much the same effect. Writing not as a critic, but simply for the instruction of students, he says of John Varley "Many of his later drawings are very conventional, being obviously painted for exhibitions. It seems to have been the desire of artists when preparing work for exhibition to strive to produce a thing of obvious labour with which to impress the public. . . . I have in my possession a picture of Holy Island Castle by John Varley, signed and dated 1810. An apparent replica of this drawing, evidently done in the studio, signed and dated 1811, is in one of the public museums (South Kensington). If these two drawings are compared, it is very evident that the earlier one, which was no doubt painted out of doors, is the great work, and that the carefully laboured one done at a later time falls far below it in merit. . . . I think the student should

be told of this rock upon which he may come to grief, and so be prepared to face it."

I would say the same to the collector, though in another sense, and for his consolation rather than for his instruction. He need not think that if he cannot afford to pay drawing-room prices for drawing-room pieces he need be any the worse off for having even an unfinished sketch or study fresh from the artist's interview with nature.

The practice of collecting drawings originated in Italy at least as early as the first half of the sixteenth century; Vasari mentions that he had a volume of them. Nowadays we should call these "Old Master" drawings; but few of them could have been the work of artists whom Vasari had not known or seen. The collection of Cardinal Leopold, of Tuscany, is said to have filled nearly a hundred volumes. In England, the first great collection was formed by the Earl of Arundel, in the reign of Charles I., and others followed. Sir Peter Lely's, numbering about three thousand, was sold in 1681. That of Richardson the painter nearly five thousand in 1747. Many of these drawings were acquired by the painters, Thomas Hudson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and other Englishmen, but it was rarely that any of the earlier English collectors condescended to open their portfolios to the drawings of their compatriots. One of the first to do so to any considerable extent was William Esdaile, whose initials "W.E." written on the mount are a sure guide to the purchase of something worth having. His collections were sold at

Christie's in 1838, and included several hundred English drawings of all sorts.

The earliest collectors almost invariably mounted old drawings on sheets of thin pasteboard, apparently made of no more than two thicknesses of thin white paper, which the paste between rendered quite stiff. These were, and are still, much more easy to handle and to keep than the thick cardboard mounts of our time, but I have never been able to obtain any. For smaller drawings I find that sheets of stiff cartridge paper, of a uniform size, come nearest to the old practice.

Another objection to cardboard or Whatman mounts is that their beautiful whiteness is unsuitable to old drawings, however good it may be for modern ones. A creamy tint is much better.

Round the drawings the old collectors usually drew a few lines or borders, making a sort of frame for them on the mount. Jonathan Richardson's pattern is one of the most typical, and is oftenest met with, with slight variations to suit the size or quality of the drawing. First, touching the drawing, comes a border of gold, about a quarter of an inch wide. Next, a quarter of an inch away, a couple of lines close together, drawn with a reed pen filled with bistre or sepia. An eighth of an inch further out comes a border of about half an inch wide, washed with sepia, and close outside it a final line of sepia with a very thick pen. That is how a drawing in bistre by Claude, about seven inches by eight inches, which is before me, was mounted by Richardson.

In slighter drawings, and more modern ones, this would perhaps be found too heavy; and I

have often noticed this bordering far overdone for modern collectors. One or two lines undoubtedly help a drawing, but with my own examples, even when framed and on the walls, I find that any decent drawing does pretty well without any lines at all, and I feel sure that it is better to be sparing with them than to overdo it.

By far the largest and most important collection of English drawings is in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. A catalogue prepared by Mr. Laurence Binyon, the first volume of which was published so long ago as 1898, fills four large octavo volumes, and there have been many accessions since. A great many of these do not come within our purview, as being of later date, or of a nature of little interest to the collector; but it will be impossible for me to avoid continual repetition of the phrase "At the British Museum" in noticing the best examples of nearly all the artists. I ask for indulgence, and also, though to a less extent, for "At South Kensington"—I prefer the old name, which is still occasionally used on official catalogues I think—where in addition to the water-colours hung in the galleries, there is a large collection of all sorts, including that of Alexander Dyce formed in the earlier years of Queen Victoria's reign.

At the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and at the FitzWilliam Museum, Cambridge, are also good collections; and the Whitworth Institute at Manchester is famous for its fine examples of the early water-colourists. But none of these are easily accessible to the general public, and

there is no need to draw on them for want of examples in London. The drawings at the British Museum are shown to students in the new Print Room—a spacious, splendid hall—and occasional visits should certainly be made there by every collector. The drawings are all kept in boxes, and after you have written down the name of the artist whose works you wish to see, they are speedily placed before you, whether they only number one or two, or a hundred. Of course, there are limits to the powers—though none to the courtesy—of the attendants, and it is no use roaming through the catalogue and asking for anything out of mere curiosity. The best use to make of the Print Room is to take with you a few drawings, especially any you are doubtful about, and ask for an opinion. You will then probably be shown the drawings of the artists whom yours suggest, and can compare. By this means you gradually acquire a great deal of practical knowledge to help you in your purchases, whereas a random scurry through a large quantity of drawings by different artists will only confuse you.

At South Kensington, the Print Room, though not so palatial, is equally well-ordered. But here there is far more gallery space than at Bloomsbury (where there are only a few examples exhibited, selected from time to time) and so many beautiful drawings are framed and hung that one need only resort to the boxes for special purposes. The Dyce Collection, which is especially rich in Gainsborough, Wilson and John Robert Cozens, should be asked for, as it is not so large as to put an undue strain on the attendants, and it gives

one a good general idea of what a private collection may become, without becoming too much. Most of the framed drawings, it is true, are "finished productions," chiefly in water-colour; but it is most important for the collector to become thoroughly familiar with these, and there is no better place for doing so than in the Museum Galleries here. *The Catalogue of Water-colour Paintings*, at South Kensington, which may be obtained there, or at H.M. Stationery Office for a shilling, is a very useful guide to the collector, and should certainly be in his hands. It is somewhat out of date, having been printed in 1908, and is certainly a little misleading, as although it purports only to notice water-colours—which, it will be observed are called "water-colour paintings," not drawings—it also includes a few drawings in pen, chalk, etc.; but these are not by any means all such drawings in the museum. Its use to the collector, besides the notices of the drawings that may be seen there, lies in the great number of artists whose work is included, making it thus a very handy and practical book of reference.

At the London Museum, on the top floor, are several rooms hung entirely with drawings which, although placed there simply for their subject, number a good many very interesting examples of the work of the less known men of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

One of the greatest, and certainly the most enduring, of the charms of collecting old English drawings is that of discovery. I do not mean by this the fortunate accident of recognising

a good thing in unexpected surroundings, and securing it for a mere trifle; that is incident to all collections. But the general ignorance of the technique of even some of the best English painters and draughtsmen is such that it is always safe to buy any unnamed scrap of drawing that is not palpably rubbish, on the chance of its being established, perhaps years later, as the work of a considerable artist. It is true that there is a reverse side to this; when the treasured Cox or Turner turns out to be only a copy. But that is only because it has been bought *as* a Cox or a Turner, and with it a certain amount of experience, which, however bitter in the mouth, will prove a wholesome corrective to the system if stoically swallowed. The only way, if you want drawings *because* they were done by great artists, is get them at Christie's, or in the best dealers' shops, and pay the full price. Otherwise, buy what you think fit for its own sake, as cheap as you can and wherever you can, and pay no attention whatever to names. Many a good drawing has been rejected by collectors merely because it has been adorned with a palpably false signature of some first-rate name—Cox and Sandby are perhaps the chief favourites. Many a bad one has been foisted on the amateur for the same reason.

Of course, one cannot expect to succeed every time, especially as a beginner. But I do believe, and my belief is based largely on my own experience, that in venturing into such an untrodden field as that we are considering, it is far better, certainly far more amusing and more interesting, to pick every flower one sees than to wait till you find the

familiar daisy or butter-cup, or the coveted rarity, and neglect the rest. Several of my greatest "successes" were made during the earlier years of my collection, though it was sometimes long before they matured. I have given one or two instances in the course of the following chapters, and for the encouragement of the beginner I may as well add one or two here. As it happens, the name of a single artist—a Frenchman who was working for some time in England—will suffice. I have now six drawings of his, only one of which I purchased since I found out who he was. The first was perhaps the best, and cost me two shillings, and a considerable amount of smiles and sniffs from my friends. The next two were small, but very good—sixpence apiece. The fourth was given me by Herbert Horne, as unworthy of being included in his own collection—it is quite a good one. The fifth I bought in Paris for ten francs—a perfectly fascinating group of dancers in the costume of the late fifties—and the sixth I paid about half a crown for in London, well knowing by this time whose work it was. The thrill of discovering the man was given to me at the Luxembourg, when turning the wings of a solander screen. I came across an unmistakable likeness of my first purchase. It was by Constantin Guys, and my half dozen are, now that the man has been recognised, worth nearer fifty pounds than the few shillings I gave for them.

In collecting old drawings one soon begins to realise that there are no rules. The field is so little trodden that not only can one go wandering all over it wherever one chooses, but that it is

often better to do so than to follow any of the beaten tracks made by the dealers who buy only fine examples of certain well-known men, chiefly in water-colour. The study of the drawings of the old English artists as a whole has been so neglected—as was the study of their paintings a generation ago—that it is still open to a collector to make substantial contributions to it from his own personal experiences in rescuing the unrecognised, comparing and dating different examples of the same artist, and filling in gaps in the development of their style.

One thing that is peculiar to this collection is that one is never offered drawings—one always has to seek them out. In the last twenty-five years I have bought nearly a thousand—including a fair proportion of little scraps that, until they proved to be of some particular interest, I shouldn't consider worth cataloguing—and only three of them I bought out of a shop window. The first was a little Constable which happened to be in a frame, and I bought it at Newark in 1897 for ten shillings. I hung it in my room in the country town where I was then living, and more than one of my visitors knowing that I was not an artist, asked me if I did it myself! The next was a very beautiful Rowlandson, which was also in an old gilt frame, in a shop window at Windsor, and this I had for five shillings—the dealer thinking it was a coloured print. The third was also a Rowlandson, for which, more recently, I had to pay twenty-five.

But why, it may be asked, are drawings never seen in shop windows? The answer is that the

public is so obsessed with the idea that nothing but the "finished article" is worth buying or selling, that only "drawing room pieces" are put in shop windows.

At enim—but some one will say—surely that is a very good answer. Tell us, why should we want to collect unfinished articles in preference to finished ones? Surely that is the reason, and a very good reason too, why the study of drawings has, as you suggest, been so neglected. Well, I would reply to that by another question. "Why do you, Sir, collect autographs, mere signatures, of famous authors, when for a few shillings you may buy their finished works in print? And you, Madam, their letters; and even you, Professor, their manuscript which, at the most, can only show you how the poor fellows laboured to alter and correct before finally issuing their work to the public?" Or again, who would not be glad to have heard from Dickens himself the outlines of any of his sketches before they were committed to paper? Who is there who would not follow the literary work of an author with the greater interest and the greater understanding if he had heard from his own lips the outlines of any of it as he first conceived it?

That is what a study of drawings gives one, apart from anything else. A greater interest and a greater understanding of the man's finished work. There is a good deal else, as one realises in looking over the more fortunate part of one's collection; but that alone distinguishes the collecting of drawings from any other collection,

and that is my answer to those who go on talking about "finish."

When Herbert Horne began collecting, and I followed his example, in the nineties, it was possible to "pick up" a great deal of good stuff for very little money; for collectors were few. Of late years I find a gradual but very decided change, and I hear on all sides that this is not due so much to a general rise in prices as to a great increase in the number of collectors. For "important" examples of the best artists—Gainsborough, Wilson, Van Dyck, etc.—no doubt there always has been a certain number of buyers; but the rest were quite neglected. It seems to be certain that this is now altered, and that a much greater number of people are beginning to take a serious interest in drawings of all sorts. Perhaps the modern artists have helped to bring this about, in exhibiting so many drawings and sketches, which people find are at least as suitable to hang on the walls of their rooms as what the country auctioneer described in his catalogue as "massive oil paintings," and considerably cheaper. That brings in the factor of mere fashion; but apart from this, and it is certainly a very practical one, there is unquestionably to-day a much wider interest among the public in all works of art, and it is only as natural that it should spread to old drawings as to old furniture and bric-a-brac of all sorts.

To give just one instance of the change, I may mention that only the other day I found a "lot" of absolute rubbish in one of the sale rooms, amongst which were three or four moth-eaten

old specimens which I thought of sufficient interest to purchase on the chance of finding out their history. True, one of them was called Hogarth—it was a late Dutch figure subject—and another was a seventeenth century Italian piece; rather nice, but quite unimposing. Well, in the old days I have bought "lots" much better than that for a couple of pounds. I decided that three pounds wouldn't be thrown away, so I went to the sale. The lot was knocked down to one of the best known dealers for £6 10s., and I could see in his eye a determination to bid much more than that; so I held my peace.

Having said as much as this as to where drawings are not to be found, I suppose I ought to give some indication of where they are to be. Well, that is the nearest thing there is to a rule in this collection; never to let on when one comes upon a *caché* of masterpieces, until one has drawn it dry—if even then. It is a point of honour among collectors not to ask. On the other hand, I have often found it a good thing to send customers to a newly discovered shop, and I generally do so. It stimulates production, and softens the heart of the dealer. Without mentioning names, which would be unfair unless one mentioned all, which is difficult, one may say that it is always worth while asking any dealer in prints or pictures, if he has any old drawings. A few—not more than a dozen that I know—have a regular stack of boxes and portfolios. The rest either have none, or a few which they regard as "by-products," more or less according to their particular line of business.

The other source of acquisition is the auction room. At Christie's occasionally—generally on Mondays—and at Foster's in Pall Mall and Robinson and Fisher's every week, and sometimes at Puttick and Simpson's in Leicester Square, and Hodgson's in Chancery Lane, there are plenty of drawings put up to auction, sometimes framed, sometimes in lots unframed. This is a totally different adventure from prowling round the shops. It is like covert shooting as compared with going out with a gun. Rocketing Turners and Gainsboroughs require nerve and precision; and even the low-flying birds—say a couple of Constable sketches mixed up in a big parcel of rubbish—take a lot of hitting. It is more of an excitement than a recreation; but it has to be done sometimes, though the more leisurely picking out of portfolios is preferable, and on the whole more profitable I think, and for this reason. A dealer buys a "lot," perhaps a parcel of forty or fifty drawings and scraps, because he wants one, or even a dozen or more of them, which he knows he can sell. The rest he doesn't care much about—having made his profit on the half-dozen, and puts them in his portfolios marked at very reasonable prices. Sooner or later he puts those that don't sell up to auction again, and so a great number of the drawings at these weekly auctions are like part of a stage army that is always coming on the scene again. In this way they get sifted about, and one has just as good a chance of finding good things in the dealer's portfolios at reasonable prices, as of bagging them, with a lot of rubbish, at an auction, where very likely the price will

be forced up against you for some particular one or half-dozen that some particular dealer wants and you don't.

It thus happens that there are still a good many sources in sequestered places that have not yet run dry, and doubtless others exist which are yet untapped. Shall I tell you what I did with the £3 that I had intended for the auction? By way of consoling myself, I paid a visit to two of my old haunts, and bought ten drawings, at an average, that is to say, of six shillings apiece. Most of them were small, and not important; but they included :—

1. A coloured aquatint, probably by Rev. W. Gilpin. I was completely deceived into supposing it an original water-colour, and I respect it accordingly, apart from its intrinsic attractions.

2. A water-colour sketch at Wenlock Abbey, by George Arnold. Unfinished, but quite "frameable."

3. A pencil sketch of Queen's College, Oxford, by A. G. Vickers.

4. A pen drawing by Francesco Vanni, with the real old "C" collector's mark on it.

5. A pen drawing by Bernardo Castelli.

6. An elaborate composition in pencil and pen of Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace, by H. Singleton.

7. The drawing by Marcellus Laroon mentioned in Chapter II. This was reproduced in the Wellesley sale catalogue in 1920.

Certainly, I would not exchange this lot for the one I missed, and I had much more pleasure in selecting it, out of some hundreds, than the

short sharp thrill of bidding would have given me.

I hope that these personal experiences in a field that has been so comparatively little explored will not be considered out of place, or egotistical; and that the mention of so many examples from my own collection, throughout the book, will not be taken as indicating that they are more worthy than any others within the reach of the collector, but merely as typical. While collecting of any kind is a matter of experience, it is peculiarly so with drawings, which conform to no definite standards such as exist for prints, china, or postage stamps. "Experience," said Wilde, "is the name we give to our mistakes," and I should be unwilling for the reader to suppose that such lucky hits as I have exemplified above and hereinafter were not occasionally balanced by less fortunate adventures. If it is only a matter of a few shillings it hardly matters; but it is certainly very bitter to find that one has been dazzled by a specious imitation into giving a higher price than usual. However, on at least two or three occasions I have been too hasty in accepting an adverse verdict, and my advice is, sit tight, and perhaps you will find you were right after all. Never be discouraged by what people say about your drawings. "People," in this sense, may be divided roughly into three classes. First, those of your household, whether (*a*) dependent on you or (*b*) merely brothers or sisters. Second, your friends; and third other collectors. To these may be added those who profess to be experts, but one need not consider them a class. One of my greatest treasures, a

Gainsborough, was given to me by Herbert Horne, soon after he began collecting, in exchange for something of mine that he considered worth a couple of pounds. Years later, he was standing in front of it, meditative and a little regretful, and I asked him why he had let me have it so cheap. He gave his dry little laugh. "X crabbed it," he said. Again, I once picked up a somewhat rough, but delightful De Wint at a shop in the Borough, for four shillings and sixpence. Some years later I thought I would sell it. I couldn't. The dealer I offered it to said he would take another opinion, and, most fortunately for me, finally decided against it. Since then it has been firmly established by several of the people who know most about De Wint. Mr. Selwyn Image once told me of a similar experience he had with a little De Wint which he had picked up for a guinea. Not one of the dealers would look at it; but he took it to James Orrock, who at once said: "Of course it's a De Wint!"

From Herbert Horne I have put up with a great deal of friendly chaff about the "rubbish" I was, and still am, in the settled habit of buying. But he has had more than one very good thing from me, and once or twice I have found in the rubbish he has passed on to me something well worth having. Nobody knows everything. It is rather discouraging at first to find a visitor commending nothing but perhaps one or two things in your collection. But by degrees, in my own case, I began to realise that no two people commended the same things, and that if one

waited long enough one would, so to speak, marry off all one's daughters.

The encouragement given to the Arts by the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768 produced an enormous army of painters and draughtsmen whose numbers were certainly maintained during the succeeding sixty or seventy years. Among these there were a few whose names will always live, and a good number whose work is of considerable interest, either on its merits or as showing the development of our national art. Still more have been noticed by contemporary writers, like Edward Dayes, Edward Edwards and J. T. Smith, whose works are no longer known as theirs. Of the rank and file there must have been hundreds to whom the collector is indebted for many a little landscape or piece of fancy which, delightful enough as a relic of its age, is never likely to be identified as the work of any particular hand. In other words, there is, apart from the best, an immense quantity of minor drawings of the latter part of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries which lies scattered and neglected, but which either from its charm or its interest as belonging to the great period of British art is well worth "gathering in out of the waste."

By far the greatest number of drawings of this sort are topographical; landscapes, generally with some building as a centre, whether a castle or abbey, a church or a dwelling house. Topography, godfathered in water-colour by Paul Sandby, spread like a popular song. In the hands of men like Thomas Hearne and Edward Dayes,

it rose to heights on which Girtin and Turner, and the later water-colourists might rest awhile, on their way to greater heights still, without loss of dignity. To the rank and file it afforded an outlet far better adapted to their capabilities than oil painting; and even the anonymous and the amateurs have left us glimpses of our old country which are, for many reasons, often preferable to modern achievements. Why are we so fond of old English things? It is simply because the Victorian age was an age of machinery, and we love to get behind it to the time when things came straight from the human hand, and to that hand from the human heart.

But there! Old English drawings are not all anonymous or amateur; and even the poorest collector wants to know what is best in his particular world, however little chance there may be of its coming within his reach. But I write to make it clear that if by collecting is meant nothing more than the acquisition of the best examples of the best masters, there is very little more to be said about it than that the best, if not the only, way is to instruct a dealer to purchase them at Christie's whenever they happen to turn up. But for those who care to cast their own nets, our sea is full of every variety of fish, of which the smallest are not always the least tasty.

I

PORTRAIT PAINTERS' DRAWINGS

CHAPTER I

PORTRAIT PAINTERS' DRAWINGS

HANS HOLBEIN'S sketch of Sir Thomas More and his family is probably the earliest extant portrait drawing executed in this country. I wish I could have written "remaining in this country"; but More was so delighted with it that he sent it to Erasmus, and it was never returned. It is now in the museum at Basle.

Holbein himself would no doubt have destroyed it; for it was of quite a different sort from the large, carefully drawn heads of the individuals composing the group (of which I shall speak presently), and had it not been for the alert, unconventional mind of More, who eagerly seized upon it to send to his friend, there is little doubt that it would have been destroyed as soon as its purpose was served.

The actual footprints of great men are fortunately effaced before there is time to preserve them; it is the footprints of their genius that are worth preserving whenever it is possible to find them. This drawing of the More family was Holbein's first footprint in England on his arrival here as a portrait painter in September 1526. Erasmus had sent him over with recommendations to More,

and in this sketch we see Sir Thomas putting him to the test. "Your painter is a wonderful artist," he wrote back to Erasmus in the following December, "but I fear he is not likely to find England so abundantly fertile as he had hoped; although I will do what I can to prevent his finding it quite barren." By that time, it is pretty certain, as evidenced by the ages of the persons portrayed, that the sketch had been already finished. More had then just built his house at Chelsea, which stood somewhere near the middle of the modern Beaufort Street, so that we actually know for certain the date, the place, and the circumstances in which the drawing was made.

Further, the names and ages of all the persons are inscribed, probably by Sir Thomas himself, on the different figures; and though there is more than one version of the finished picture in existence, none of them is authentic, and the original—if indeed it was ever painted—is probably lost for ever.

If this were the only extant drawing by Holbein, we should have formed a very imperfect idea of his methods, and even of his skill as a draughtsman. Its amazing vivacity, its masterly outline and its grasp of a complex subject, are still but a small part of the evidence he has left of the successive steps by which he arrived at the extraordinary results obtained in his finished portraits. This was but the beginning. The next step was to make a careful drawing, almost of life-size, of the head of each of the figures. In the wonderful series of eighty-nine of these heads, which is now at Windsor, those of Sir John and Sir Thomas

HANS HOLBEIN.

TWO STUDIES OF ENGLISH LADIES.

(*British Museum.*)

To face p. 46.

More, John More, Lady More, Elizabeth Dancy, and Cecily Heron, and at the British Museum that of Margaret Roper, are all easily recognisable from this life-like sketch. How fascinating it is to realise how much this single sheet of paper can show us of one of the most remarkable households that has ever existed. For it is evident from the resemblance between the figures in the sketch and the more carefully drawn heads at Windsor, that the former was almost photographic in its vividness. Here we can see, as though they were actually standing alive before our eyes, a group of personages of whom nearly every one is mentioned in contemporary literature. Even the ape is immortalised in the *Dialogues* of Erasmus.

From the death of Holbein in 1543 to the arrival of Van Dyck in this country as Court painter to James I., the annals of painting are too meagre to afford any great expectation of the discovery of drawings of any sort. The portrait painters were neither few nor obscure, including Antonio Mor, Lucas de Heere, Cornelius Ketel, Federigo Zucchero, Marc Garrard and Paul Vansomer ; but whether they left any drawings is very doubtful. As they were one and all of them foreigners—which means that they were working in a country where they had no family ties and where there was no school of painting—we should ask for the strictest proof as to the origin of any drawing of the sixteenth century that is claimed to have been done in England. Isaac Oliver has left a few, but so far as I am aware, not portraits.

Of the seventy-eight drawings by **Sir Anthony Van Dyck** at the British Museum, only eighteen

are for English portraits ; most of them are slight, but in their wonderful breadth and sweep they far excel the more finished efforts of any of his successors in this country. Their chief object would seem to have been pose, and when a few magic strokes of chalk had accomplished this, their purpose was achieved and no further care bestowed on them. In them we are given, as it were, the secret of Van Dyck's mastery of pose, and that is more than enough to raise these drawings far above anything we are likely to find in the work of other painters in England.

De Piles, who had his information direct from Eberhard Jabach, who had known Van Dyck in former days at Antwerp, describes his method thus : " Après avoir légèrement ébauché un Portrait il faisait mettre la personne dans l'attitude qu'il avait auparavant modelée, et avec du papier gris et des crayons blancs et noirs, it dessinait en un quart d'heure sa taille et ses habits qu'il disposait d'une manière grande et d'un gout exquis. Il donnait ensuite le dessin à d'habiles gens qu'il avait chez lui pour le peindre d'apres les habits même queles personnages avaient envoyes' exprès à la prière de Vandeik. Des elèves ayant fait d'après nature ce qu'ils pourront aux draperies, il repassait légèrement dessus et y mettait en très peu de temps, par son intelligence, l'art et la vérité que nous y admirons."

This is certainly borne out by the character of the known drawings of Van Dyck, and it should serve as a warning to collectors not to accept anything more elaborate or detailed as from the master's own hand. Naturally enough, very

early portrait drawings by great masters are not very plentiful, and there is always a tendency towards attributing any unknown drawing to the best-known painter of its time. On the other hand, it is equally natural that the slightest sketches of the really great men should be more carefully preserved than those of inferior artists, and only last year in a sale, amongst a large lot of early portrait and drapery studies, some of which bore the well-known collector's mark of Thomas Hudson, there were several that were in all probability by Van Dyck. The following are some of the best-known examples in private hands or at the museums. The original sketch for a procession of the Knights of the Garter is in the collection of the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir Castle, and a study for two heralds in the Albertina Gallery at Vienna. These were part of a scheme for decorating the walls of the Banqueting House at Whitehall, the ceiling of which had been painted by Rubens. At the British Museum is a study for one of the Knights—possibly James, Duke of Lennox. In the Antwerp Exhibition in 1899, thirty-two drawings were included, of which the following are English :—

Portrait of Philip, Earl of Pembroke ; a pen drawing heightened with white (King of Italy) ; portrait of Charles I., in indian ink (King of Italy) ; portrait of Charles I., in pencil (Sir J. C. Robinson) ; portrait of Lady Ritchie at full length, in two colours (Mr. J. P. Heseltine).

William Dobson, born in London in 1610, was closely associated with Van Dyck, by whom he was befriended and introduced to the King.

At South Kensington is a very good full-length drawing in black chalk of a man by him, being apparently a finished sketch for a portrait. In a country mansion I once came, quite unexpectedly, upon a rough sketch in chalk on grey paper of a family group—father and mother and two or three children, in oblong—which was endorsed "Dobson, Sir John Danvers." This, by the by, must have been done at Danvers's House, Chelsea, which was only a stone's throw from More's house where Holbein made his sketch a century earlier, being, in fact, a part of More's original holding.

To **Sir Peter Lely** we are indebted for two very fine groups of portraits; the Hampton Court Beauties, as they are called, and the Greenwich Admirals. These were painted after the Restoration, and Lely is better known by his later work, which was not invariably his best. He is less remembered as the successor to Van Dyck as Court painter to Charles I., in 1641, than as the predecessor to Kneller as painter of the Court beauties of Charles II.

It is to his earlier period that the drawing here reproduced is probably to be referred, if we accept Mr. Binyon's attribution of it to Lely in the *Burlington Magazine* for November 1909. Of his later drawings there are several good examples, large heads in chalks, at the British Museum. In the catalogue of Knight's sale in 1841 are "The portrait of Greenhill the painter and another of an old lady, in coloured chalks."

In Esdaile's, Lots 1263–7 were as follows: Sketch of a gentleman, and a landscape; Portrait of a lady in crayons; The Duke of Monmouth,

SIR PETER LELY.

A LADY STANDING BY A FOUNTAIN.

To face p. 50.

the Earl of Rochester, and Nell Gwyn. A goodly company, but they fetched between them only £2 14s. 6d.

At the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, is a very charming head of a young girl in a broad-brimmed hat, with ringlets falling over her shoulders. This was reproduced in the Walpole Society's Volume, No. V, together with one or two other portrait heads of this period—in particular a very fine head of a young man, inscribed "T. Thrumpton, *fecit* 1667."

The most promising of Lely's scholars, according to Walpole, was **John Greenhill**; who was born in 1649 and died in 1676. The meagre notice accorded him in the *Anecdotes* would hardly be worth mentioning here, were not our interest aroused by his drawing of a head of the Earl of Bristol, which is in the Dyce Collection at South Kensington. Walpole mentions that his heads in crayon (as is this) were much admired, and, had not his career been marred by excess and prematurely ended, it is possible that he might have proved a worthy rival to his master.

Another head in coloured chalks of Catherine, Countess of Pembroke, signed "J. G.," was exhibited at Messrs. Colnaghi's in 1916.

John Riley, who is represented in the British Museum collection by a single drawing—a portrait study of the head of an old man—is very possibly the author of many others which are passed about as Lely's or Kneller's. "One of the best native painters that has flourished in England," says Walpole, "whose talents while living were obscured by the fame rather than by the merits of Kneller,

and depressed since by being confounded with Lely; an honour unlucky to his reputation. . . . With a quarter of Sir Godfrey's vanity he might have persuaded the world he was as great a master."

Walpole also mentions that Jonathan Richardson, the artist and collector, married a niece of Riley, and inherited about £800 in pictures, drawings, and effects, so that it is more than probable that there are a good many of his drawings in existence, though not attributed to him.

At South Kensington there is also a single example of Riley's work, a crayon drawing of Lady Warner.

Sir Godfrey Kneller is said to have been a pupil of Rembrandt, though nobody would believe it who only knows his portraits. But that is another story; and a glance at half a dozen of his drawings at the British Museum reveals him as an artist of no mean ability. Three of the best of these are of animals—a hound, a fawn, and a boar. Three others are portrait studies of men. The rest are less interesting, and more reminiscent of his activities in portrait painting as a mere business.

To **Jonathan Richardson** we probably owe the preservation of a great number of drawings—English as well as foreign—which but for him would have perished. For besides inheriting from his uncle, he was an industrious collector himself, and handed on the collection to Jonathan his son and to Thomas Hudson, the painter, his son-in-law. "The sale of his collection of drawings in February 1747," says Walpole, "lasted eighteen days, and produced about £2,060 . . . after the death of the

son in 1771, the remains of the father's collection were sold. There were hundreds of portraits of both in chalks by the father, with the dates when executed, for after his retirement from business the good old man seems to have amused himself with writing a short poem and drawing his own or son's portrait every day. The son, equally tender, had marked several with expressions on his *dear father.* There were a few pictures and drawings by the son, for he painted a little too."

The father and the son were, in fact, so inseparable as to occasion comment from the scoffers. Mr. Binyon, more serious, catalogues the drawings of the two under one heading, noting that some have been attributed to the elder and some to the younger, but with the reservation that there seems to be no certain evidence that any of them belonged to the latter, and the differences in style are not such as to afford a safe criterion. There were only a few drawings by the son in his own collection sold in 1771, but hundreds by the father.

Most of the thirty-eight drawings in the British Museum catalogue are portrait heads from the life, and broadly speaking they fall into three classes, being either large chalk sketches (about 15 × 11 inches) on tinted paper, or small and more carefully finished drawings in pencil on vellum (about 5 × 4 inches), or pen and ink.

As they are nearly all inscribed with the date and name of the sitter, and in some cases with other particulars, and as they certainly possess a good deal of merit—Walpole says that old Richardson was undoubtedly one of the best English painters

of a head that had appeared in this country—it may be worth mentioning some of them.

Among the chalk drawings, besides four of the painter, are the following: Thomas Hudson, inscribed: "Thomas Hudson, Painter, when young, drawn by Jonathan Richardson, his Master and Father-in-law. By Richardson's daughter Hudson had one daughter, who died in her childhood."

Laurence Eusden, the laureate. Half-length, smiling and holding up a laurel wreath with a ribbon inscribed *Rex mihi dedit.*

Among the pen and ink sketches are: Sir James Thornhill, inscribed: *J. Thornhill, ætat. 57 on this July y^e 25th. J. Richardson, del. at Thornhill, 21 July* 1733; Sir Hans Sloane, dated September 10, 1740; William Cheselden, the surgeon, dated December 2, 1735.

Mrs. Pope, inscribed: *Mr. Pope's mother, from the Life, at Twitnam. She was daughter to Sam. Cooper y^e Limner. This is a Scetch for a finished one in Black lead my F. made for Mr. Pope. Both extremely like Mrs. Pope,* 5 *July* 173–.

In pencil on vellum, besides several of both the father and son, and others not from the life, are the following:—

Sir James Thornhill, inscribed: *Aug.* 1, 1733, *done at Thornhill in Dorset.*

Mrs. Drummond, inscribed: *Mrs. Drummond, Quakr Prea*[*cher*], 2 *Feb.* 17—.

Mrs. Catherine Knapp, inscribed: *Mrs. Cath. Knapp.* The same, *Mrs. Cath. Knapp,* 31 *Oct.* 1733.

In my own collection I have a carefully finished head in a full wig, in pencil on vellum, inscribed:

W. Melnot, 1734; and another of John Riley, thus inscribed: *In memory of favours received bet.* 50 *and three-score years ago, from Mr. Thos. Riley. J. R.*, 18 *Aug.* 1741.

John Vanderbank was both a busy portrait painter and a prolific draughtsman. His portrait sketches, both of heads and whole figures in thick pen outline, are frequently met with, but being somewhat sketchy and uncoloured, they are little regarded, and can be had quite cheap. I bought a pair some years ago, probably of the same subject —a lady holding a shepherd's crook, one standing, the other sitting. The latter I recognised soon afterwards, from the painted portrait in one of the sale rooms, as Mrs. Metcalfe. Another, still slighter, of a man with a pair of calipers, is probably a study for the slightly different portrait of Tycho Wing, the astronomer, which is at the Stationers' Hall in the City. Many of these sketches are signed " J. V." with a date. As a book illustrator, Vanderbank has a place in our concluding chapter.

Of **Francis Cotes** there is a delightful example in water-colour at the British Museum, the young Queen Charlotte seated in a chair with the infant Princess Royal in her lap. The child is asleep, with the Queen's left hand supporting her, while, with her right uplifted with the forefinger extended, she enjoins silence. The Duchess of Ancaster stands on the left, in profile, leaning over the chair. This was reproduced in colour as the frontispiece to Portfolio Monograph No. 48. It is of about the same date as Mortimer's group of the Drake family, and the drawing of the head

and pose of the Duchess is very like it. It is much more careful and complete than an ordinary portrait sketch, and must evidently have been done to submit to the Queen.

Thomas Hudson, like his father-in-law Jonathan Richardson, was a collector as well as a painter, and his well-known mark "T. H." on a drawing is a very useful signal to collectors. I do not remember seeing any of his own drawings, and it may possibly have been from him that his pupil, Sir Joshua Reynolds, formed the habit of painting straight on to the canvas without any preliminary drawing on paper. But the whole subject of early portrait drawings is very vaguely known, and amid the crowd of portrait painters of no particular merit that had been gradually increasing since the Act of Settlement, it is generally impossible to fix on one or another as the author of any drawing of this period.

We now come to the two English giants who raised the practice of portraiture in this country from a business to an art. Raised it, too, to such heights as have never since been equalled, though the example they set sufficed to keep that art from ever failing to maintain a prominent place in the history of painting. To mention Gainsborough first is not to imply that he was superior to Reynolds. The question of their respective excellencies is not to be so easily determined, and it must be left to individual opinion to express a preference for the one or the other, both as to their art and their influence. But though neither has left any large number of portrait sketches, those of **Thomas Gainsborough** are the more

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.

A MOTHER AND THREE CHILDREN.

(*British Museum.*)

To face p 56.

numerous ; for while Reynolds actually discouraged the practice of drawing, with Gainsborough it was a diversion, if not a passion, and occupied a great deal of his time when he was not engaged in painting. Of his landscape drawings we shall speak in another chapter, wishing enough that the portrait sketches equalled them in number as they do in every other respect.

In *The Drawings of Gainsborough*, published by George Newnes, Limited, some years ago, forty-four drawings are beautifully reproduced, chiefly from examples in the British Museum, of which seventeen are portraits. Two of these are sketches for very famous pictures, namely *The Duchess of Devonshire* and *The Blue Boy*. But it must be said at once that it is extremely doubtful whether the latter is by Gainsborough himself, as Lord Ronald Gower in his preface seems to take for granted. If it is, it is quite unlike his usual touch, and lacks the delicate charm that enables one to recognise his hand at a first glance. If it were not that it seems to be a study for so attractive and famous a painting, it could hardly be attributed to Gainsborough. The hard pen outline, the clumsy drawing of the hand, and the over-emphasised features, are all against it.

With the Duchess it is quite different, and we see Gainsborough in every touch. It is hardly too much to say that, after seeing this one drawing alone, one could recognise any other Gainsborough drawing at first sight. It is drawn with black chalk on grey paper, in the softest possible manner, the folds of the dress heightened here and there with delicious touches of white. It is the very

perfection of romantic expression, wanting neither in truth nor force, yet so deftly, so magically put as to turn the reality into an exquisite vision.

A sketch like this, and others which will be noticed presently, gives us a clue to the secret of the charm of Gainsborough's unfinished work. It is impossible to study it and not come to the conclusion that he was in love with at least three separate objects. He was in love, first with his art as a whole. He was in love with his sketch as it grew under his hand, and he was in love with the sitter. Take any other man's portrait studies, and you will find that he had some definite purpose in view, whether it was likeness, pose, chiaroscuro, or what not. But the purpose was all. With Gainsborough, one feels that he was throbbing with emotion, the sort of emotion that I have attempted to diagnose and separate into three elements above, but which, as we know from his biographers, was his natural way of looking at things. When he was painting the Royal Children, Angelo tells us that "he was almost raving mad with ecstasy in beholding such a constellation of youthful loveliness." Indeed, he used to rattle away in so hyperbolical a strain upon the subject of his art, that any indifferent observer would have concluded the painter was beside his wits. "Talk of the Greeks," he would exclaim, "the pale-faced, long-nosed unmeaning ghosts! Look at the living delectable carnations of the royal progeny. Talk of old Dame Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi! Sir, here you behold half a score of youthful divinities. Look on, ye Gods!"

So when he was drawing, this must have been—

one cannot help seeing it—the sort of inspiration which filled him and compelled him to get down on the paper not only the scheme or plan, but as much of the charm of the sitter as it would hold. Look at the delicate shading of the back of the neck and shoulder of the *Lady with a Harp*. The line is enough, it is as much and more than any but himself could have done ; but he cannot resist doing just a little more, and making a picture of it. Look at the ribbon round her neck, tied at the back. Again a picture. But for the face, where J. R. Smith or any minor person would have put in the features, we are back to business again, and there is a mere blur.

Another *Lady with a Harp* is the half-length of Lady Clarges, the other probably being the Countess of Lincoln. This is a more finished drawing, the other sketched in outline. The familiar white Pomeranian dog is seen through the harp-strings, and the sitter's head is a larger feature in the composition, and so is drawn in with more care. This is less characteristic of Gainsborough's manner, leaving not so much as usual to the imagination as he was so happy in doing. In the soft drapery over the breast and arm he seems to be working as he did with oil paint, creating an extraordinarily vivid impression of reality with the most unexpected and apparently meaningless strokes.

In a drawing in black chalk on yellowish paper, inscribed *Captain of a Sailing Vessel at Amsterdam*, we see a really finished portrait. The subject is a bluff, broad-faced man, clean shaven, who sits regarding the artist, one hand in his coat

front, the other on his hip. Here there is little fancy work, but bold straight forward strokes, and no stint of black chalk on the three-cornered hat to show up the face beneath. As a portrait it is marvellous, and for the strength and truth of its drawing it is comparable with the work of the best of the older masters. To put it beside similar pieces of Morland, Rowlandson, Smith, or Downman is simply to efface them.

Contrast with this the *Musical Party*, which is the merest sketch in red chalk on yellowish paper of a group of four people at a spinet. Here the figures are only a few scratches, and the faces little more than curved lines; but the effect is perfectly amazing. You cannot help seeing at a glance that the lady seated at the piano is reading the notes, that the gentleman bending over on her left is experiencing the usual difficulty of reading the words; from the profile *perdu* of the violinist on her right we learn exactly what is passing in his mind as he carefully follows the score, while the tall, timid young lady behind has to crane her neck a little to see the book over her sister's head. Who but Gainsborough could do so much with such a few and such apparently unpromising lines?

Drawings by **Sir Joshua Reynolds** are extremely scarce. The reason for this may be gathered from the well-known passages in his Second *Discourse*, of which the following extract gives the substance: "The port-crayon ought to be for ever in your hands. . . . But while I mention the port-crayon as the student's constant companion, he must still remember, that the

pencil [that is to say the brush] is the instrument by which he must hope to obtain eminence. What, therefore, I wish to impress upon you is, that whenever an opportunity offers, you paint your studies instead of drawing them . . . if painting comprises both drawing and colouring, and if by a short struggle of resolute industry the same expedition is attainable in painting as in drawing on paper, I cannot see what objection can justly be made to the practice; or why that should be done by parts which may be done all together. . . . These instructions I have ventured to offer from my own experience."

This is confirmed by the account of Reynolds given by Edward Edwards in his *Anecdotes of Painters*, where he states that "Sir Joshua scarcely ever made any drawings, and the few which he did produce cannot claim notice but for their great scarcity and for being the work of so distinguished an artist."

Edwards, with all his pomposity of verbal expression, was a pretty shrewd critic. He continues: "The few academy figures which he drew (the late Mr. N. Hone had one or two specimens which were sold in the sale of his collection of prints and drawings) are poor and feeble in the extreme. It would be difficult to collect a dozen specimens of all of them together. While he was with Mr. Hudson, he made some copies after the drawings of Guercino which he executed with great success."

It must not, however, be supposed that the feebleness of his Academy studies extended to those few portrait drawings which he executed.

Whatever their lack of brilliancy or charm when compared with those of Gainsborough they certainly have the force or at least the firmness of the great master.

In the *British Museum Catalogue* there are only three portraits, though several more have been acquired since it was printed.

1. Miss Theophila Gwatkin, a study for Lord Glenconner's picture generally known as *Lesbia*. This is signed J. R. It is a large drawing, though slight, in crayons, 18 × 12 inches.

2. Mrs. Robinson (" Perdita "), a study for the picture called *Contemplation*, now in the Wallace Collection. A small sketch (6 × 5 inches), in crayons on light brown paper.

3. Lady Gertrude FitzPatrick, in red chalk ($13\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{4}$ inches). Apparently a first idea for the picture of a child sitting on the ground with a bunch of grapes in her lap.

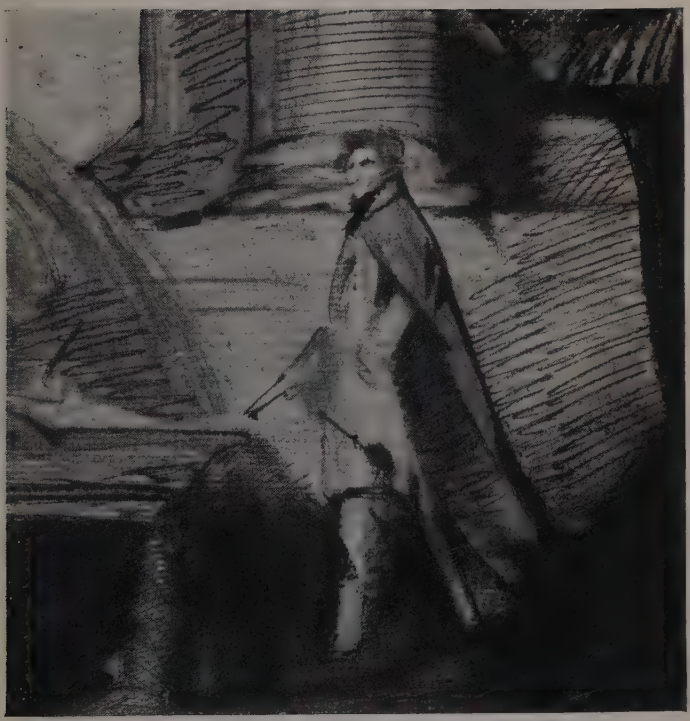
The more recent acquirements include :—

(*a*) A Lady with a mask, in black and white chalk on blue paper.

(*b*) Oliver Goldsmith, head and bust, and one hand, in pen and sepia.

This last is in quite a different manner from the others, being smaller and more exact and complete.

The only other complete studies by Reynolds for pictures, which are known to exist are a small, finished water-colour of Mrs. Lloyd carving her name on a tree (at the British Museum) and the little sketch reproduced on the opposite page. This measures no more than $5\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and



SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

STUDY FOR THE PORTRAIT OF LORD ROCKINGHAM AT WINDSOR CASTLE.

To face p. 62.

though possibly it has been a little cut, it still contains the essentials of the whole composition.

This I was fortunate enough to discover amid a mass of utter rubbish in a little shop in Albany Street a good many years ago, and to purchase it for a shilling. It was not for some years that I discovered its real value and interest; for at first sight it appears to represent a gentleman in a frock-coat and trousers, and I was long puzzled to ascribe it to anyone of the Victorian period. An accidental glance at the mezzotint of the portrait of Lord Rockingham as I was passing a shop window gave me the clue, and on comparing the drawing with the print, I was easily satisfied that my shilling had not been badly invested. If any confirmation were needed, it was found when comparing the technique with that of the sketch of the head and bust of Oliver Goldsmith above mentioned.

It would be interesting to know whether this is indeed a unique example, or whether there are not others of the same class which have escaped recognition. Are we to suppose that none others, either the single portraits or the wonderful groups, were similarly plotted out? Or were they drawn with the brush straight on to the canvas, as Edwards would have us believe? Possibly the explanation is that this particular sketch was made at Lord Rockingham's request for submission to him, as it seems hardly credible that any considerable number of such sketches could be or ever have been in existence without their being known of.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that a few years ago there was a perfect outburst of small heads of

ladies, in pen and brown ink, and sometimes a little colour wash, attributed to Reynolds and in some cases, I think, with his "signature." At a first glance they might be taken for Reynolds's, but the second proclaimed them as "too good to be true," and a third condemned them for ever as modern "fakes."

Another, though far slighter and very different sketch in pen, and a few touches of sepia work, was shown to me some years ago in a dealer's shop, and is now in the British Museum. It is a portrait of a lady, half or three-quarter length, seated, and the frame was endorsed "From the Revd. Pearce Edgcumbe." This appears to be a sketch from the life, its interest being greatly enhanced by the fact that it was done on the back of a sheet of writing-paper, the other side of which had apparently been used for drafting the Eleventh *Discourse*. This is what is written upon it :—

"Genius is like a General ['or Colonel' erased] of an army who without attending to the movements of individuals takes consideration only of the masses, and sees (? definitely) what to an ordinary or inexperienced observer would mean all confusion—a union of contraries is necessary—courage and calmness."

"Say rather Genius is the power of seeing a difference where other people see none. This is necessary towards expressing the passions both of these are acquired by practice."

If I am not mistaken, this passage does not appear in the *Discourses*, but it is easy to assign a place for it in the Eleventh, beside the observations on looking at things as a whole.

Three or four sketches with a pen are also among the more recent acquisitions at the British Museum, which are interesting as being inscribed by Sir Joshua himself as copies of portraits by Kneller. Also a careful copy—apparently—in red chalk outline, of an old master figure subject, which bears the collectors' marks of Paul Sandby and Nathaniel Hone. How many other drawings of this sort by Reynolds may be among the unrecognised flotsam and jetsam of dealers' portfolios, it would be interesting to know.

At South Kensington is a very interesting sketch, in black chalk outline on grey paper, for the whole-length portrait of the Marchioness of Tavistock. This, again, is quite "unique," inasmuch as no other sketches of a similar character for Reynolds's portraits are known; and his portraits are so well known that they could hardly fail to be recognised, unless for some strange combination of chances in design like that which disguised Lord Rockingham in a frock-coat!

Another drawing at South Kensington, formerly called Sir Joshua's, of a lady with a bow, is now attributed to Daniel Gardiner. On the other hand, the fine drawing of two men by Zoffany—which was reproduced in Portfolio Monograph, No. 48—has been given to Reynolds, I think too hastily.

George Romney, whose attainments in portraiture are only inferior to those of Reynolds and Gainsborough, has left large quantities of rough drawings in pencil and in sepia. These are for the most part portrait sketches or studies, but there are also many of classical subjects.

It is a pity that Romney cared so little about his

sketches; they seem to be so entirely for use, whereas the pictures which grew from them seem for nothing but ornament. What sounds more delightful than a sketch by Romney for a portrait of a mother and child? What amateur would not hasten to purchase it if he heard he could do so, especially for a mere song? And yet there are few, if any, of Romney's sketches which would be likely to fetch more than a pound or two on their merits alone, and of the dozen or more which I have picked up for a few shillings from time to time I find the most common thing asked is, "But how do you know they are Romney's?"

The fact is that much of Romney's success in portraiture (which by the by he hated) was due to his simplicity of design and chiaroscuro. Consequently, the framework of the picture was the all-important matter to be settled before anything else, and it was to this end only that the drawings were directed. It was not pose alone, as we saw in the case of Van Dyck, but attitude, with regard to the composition, that Romney sought first and foremost to settle in his mind before starting on a portrait. It did not matter to him whether it looked nice or not. That was not what he was after. The time for beautification came later.

But these rough sketches have undoubtedly a great fascination for anyone who cares enough for art to look below the surface of things. If a portrait were nothing but a piece of canvas covered over with one or more coatings of various shades of paint, it would not matter so very much how it came to be painted. It is quite possible that

GEORGE ROMNEY.

STUDY FOR A PORTRAIT OF A LADY.

To face p. 66.

science may one of these days discover the secret of arranging pigments upon a flat surface by the action of a lens, in some such manner as the particles on a photographic plate are affected, which will result in a representation of subjects or objects exactly as they are in nature. Zeuxis may have deceived the birds with some such secret, now lost. But if such a thing were ever to happen, it would not affect art any more than the invention of a machine capable of recording in words an exact description of scenery would affect literature. Art is the expression of human feeling. Consequently, the making of a picture, the first attempt to give utterance to the idea in the painter's mind, is no less a work of art than the draft of a poem. It is not complete, it is not intended to be published abroad as the finished expression of the author's feelings ; but in reality it is sometimes a better, truer expression, so far as it goes, than the finished work affords.

As much as this can hardly be said for Romney's drawings, they are more in the nature of notes. In this respect we may say that he stands midway between Reynolds and Gainsborough in his practice, the former making no drawings at all, the latter filling them with a grace and charm which was quite superfluous if they were merely for studies.

There are none of **Raeburn's** drawings at the British Museum, and nothing of any importance by **Copley.** The former is known to have been as sparing of his time in drawing with anything but the brush as Reynolds was, and the only portrait sketch which I have seen attributed to him was a

pencil outline that was more likely to have been by James Ward or George Morland. At South Kensington are some excellent studies by Copley for the Gibraltar picture, but his portrait drawings are not known, though very possibly there are a good many in existence.

The charming family group (*Facing p.* 68) which I purchased out of Lord Northbrook's collection last year, though ascribed to Copley, bears no discernible traces of the hand that made the Gibraltar studies, or of the originality in grouping that marks the pictures of the Royal Children at Windsor or the Sitwell Family at Renishaw. Certainly it is the work of one of the greater portrait painters —possibly even Gainsborough's. On the same page (*Facing p.* 68) is reproduced a family group which, by a lucky chance, I was able to identify as the work of **James Hamilton Mortimer, R.A.** The oil-painting, which is at Shardloes, is a very disappointing realisation of such a charming idea ; but Mortimer was less a portrait painter than a draughtsman and designer of fanciful subjects, as we shall find in a later chapter.

By **Hoppner** there are five portrait sketches at the British Museum. Two of these, half-length drawings in black and red chalk of Mrs. Hoppner, are familiar to the general public, one having been engraved in stipple as " Eliza " and published in 1785, and the other (if I am not mistaken) being reproduced in Mr. Humphry Ward's important monograph upon Hoppner.

With **Lawrence** we feel that we are no longer speaking of " old " English drawings. No doubt most of those drawings which are known belong to

JAMES HAMILTON MORTIMER.
PORTRAIT GROUP.

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY.
PORTRAIT GROUP.

To face p. 68.

a fairly late period in his career. There is one out of the twenty examples at the British Museum which is of earlier date, namely the study of Lady Hamilton, in black and red chalk, which is inscribed by her "Emma, 1791." It was engraved by C. Knight in 1792. It has been reproduced in Lord Ronald Gower's book on Lawrence published by Goupil in 1901.

In Esdaile's sale, by the by, were two slight landscape drawings by Lawrence. One of these is in the British Museum; the other I found only the other day in a shop. It was called "Gainsborough," so I had to give a pound for it; both had been endorsed by Esdaile (who bought them in 1802) as having been authenticated by Lawrence himself.

John Downman, so well known for his beautiful little bust-portraits in coloured chalks, was a most accomplished draughtsman; and it is almost regrettable that he succeeded so well in this one particular line as to have left us little else to judge him by. At the British Museum is a little album of some of his minor drawings and sketches which he seems to have thought worth keeping, for they all have inscriptions beneath them in his own hand. Here are some of them:—

First sketch for my drawing from the old ballad of the "Bonny Seaman."

Design for the portrait of Lady Cli Lamb.

The concluding scene from the *Story of Elizabeth.*

Comedy, a design by J. D.

Study for Ultha in my picture from Fingal.

Eve, painted the size of life by J. D.

The Dove, kept most part of 20 years by J. D.

Our favourite Pussy, Tibby, at Malling, J. D.

Toad from our Pond, West Malling, by J. D.

These are for the most part in soft, black chalk, touched here and there with colour—the faces, we might say, with rouge—I mean, of course, the human ones. Of his famous portrait drawings there is hardly any need to speak, but one may be permitted to say that their popularity is better deserved than that of almost any other class of highly priced works.

I think I have now mentioned enough of the most considerable portrait painters in England during our period to give some sort of idea of what may be looked for in the way of portrait drawings. But it is very necessary to add that for every one drawing by any of these bigger men there must be hundreds that are not by any of them, though very often—at least among the later ones—quite as interesting. In other words, the tendency to ascribe an anonymous drawing to one of the well-known artists of the period is inevitable ; but while the collector should hesitate to accept such ascriptions from the vendor, it is at the same time one of the great—and also useful—delights of collecting to recover the real authorship, even though it may at first seem disappointing to find that the treasure is not the work of the better-known man. Moreover, apart from the work of the regular portrait painters and draughtsmen there are hundreds of occasional portrait drawings

by other artists. Sometimes they drew their relations and friends, sometimes each other. Quite an interesting volume could be filled with this latter class alone, as it would include examples as well as portraits of almost every artist we know.

II

DRAWINGS OF LIFE AND MANNERS

CHAPTER II

DRAWINGS OF LIFE AND MANNERS

Akin to portrait drawings are a good many of the very numerous and varied sketches of social groups, sometimes actually (and often tending in the direction of) caricature, and sometimes more serious, from which we are able to gather something of the appearance and habits of our ancestors in their everyday life. In painting, we have little, if anything, of the sort; for the early "Conversation pieces" of Hogarth and one or two of his contemporaries are not comparable with the seventeenth-century Dutch pictures, and they soon gave way to the more conventional "family groups" which, besides being very scarce, are seldom less conventional than the single portraits.

Marcellus Laroon, the younger, born in 1679, had a varied career, travelling on embassies as a page, acting and singing at Drury Lane, fighting in the footguards under Marlborough, and retiring as Captain in 1732. He lived till 1772, and became a friend of Hogarth. Three out of the five of his drawings in the British Museum are scenes of life and manners, two of which were reproduced in the writers' *English Society of the Eighteenth Century*, the last of the Portfolio Monographs, No. 48.

One of these, catalogued as *A Concert at Montagu House*, 1736, is of more than ordinary interest, inasmuch as it is inscribed on the mount by Horace Walpole with the names of some of the persons: "A concert, by Captain Laroon. The Gentleman on the left under the door is John, 2nd Duke of Montagu; the lady standing by him is his 2nd daughter, Mary, Countess of Cardigan, afterwards Duchess of Montagu. N. W."

It is signed and dated by the artist "Marcellus Laroon, *fecit* 1736." The harpsichord player is supposed to be Heidegger. A drawing which I bought a year or two ago (*Facing p.* 76) is, I think, also a scene in Montagu House.

Another is a *Scene in a Garden*, of two ladies standing on a terrace and a gentleman taking a pinch of snuff. The third is *The Promenade in the Mall*—a group of two ladies, two gentlemen, and a little girl between them coming from the right, and three men sitting on a seat on the left. Beyond the trees is an orange woman offering her fruit to a passing couple, and a cavalier riding. This is signed and dated "Mar: Laroon, *f.* 1744."

Sir Robert Witt has a pair of pencil drawings, in remarkably fresh condition, of groups of figures at table. Both are inscribed, "Done for Mr. Ashton."

Another drawing by Marcellus Laroon, now in my possession, is of peculiar interest to collectors, from an inscription on the mount, dated 1790. "Mr. Bull found this drawing," it runs, "in a lot bought for him, some little time since; it may *possibly* be of some use to Mr. Walpole, 'tis

MARCELLUS LAROON.

A PARTY AT MONTAGU HOUSE.

To face p. 76.

of none to Mr. Bull, nor did he know till yesterday that it was in the lot ordered to be bought for him."

This indicates that Horace Walpole had, for some reason or other, an interest in Laroon, long after the first publication of the *Ancedotes of Painting*. Or was it merely the subject of the drawing? It is inscribed: "Mat Ashton the Painter at Chester—Carigatura. M. Lar. *Ft.*"

It represents Ashton, dressed in a heavy overcoat and boots much too big for him, and a broad-brimmed hat, standing to the right, while on the left is a group of three men who are jeering at him. Out of his mouth proceeds a label inscribed "Miserable Goths." The drawing, which is in pencil, was reproduced in the magnificent catalogue of the Wellesley sale in 1921, but for some reason was sold very cheap. It is a good and thoroughly characteristic example, and as a document, disclosing as it does the amenities of collecting in those early days, and giving a glimpse of the interests of Walpole in his old age, it is of quite exceptional interest.

All of these drawings are of a quality that we should hardly expect of an amateur whose career was so full of incident. They were quite as skilful and nearly as elegant as those of Gravelot. They give one the impression of having been executed with ease as well as with knowledge, and it is therefore rather surprising that more of them have not come to light, as they cannot be supposed to be the only examples from such an accomplished hand.

Another minor artist of this period was **Philip**

Mercier, who is best known from the mezzotints of fancy subjects which were indifferently made from his works. He, too, has left us some drawings of life and manners of which there are four at the British Museum. One of these, *A Music Party* on the terrace of a country mansion, was reproduced in the Portfolio Monograph above mentioned. Another is of a Card Party, in which there are as many as a dozen figures. A third is *Children Playing at a Table.*

The fourth, *Heidegger in a Rage,* is the story of one of the many practical jokes played by the Duke of Montagu. Heidegger was manager of the opera and notoriously ugly. He was made drunk and a mask taken from his features. A man was hired to impersonate him at the next masquerade, and no sooner had the real Heidegger ordered "God Save the King," than the false one ordered "Charley over the Water." A scene ensued, and the joke becoming serious, the duke ordered his man to unmask. Heidegger retired in great wrath, seated himself in an arm-chair, furiously commanded his attendants to extinguish the lights, and swore he would never again superintend the masquerade unless the mask was defaced and the mould broken in his presence.

In the drawing Heidegger is seated in a chair apparently ordering the flambeaux to be extinguished and the masks to be broken. It was engraved by John Ireland for the third volume of his *Hogarth Illustrated,* with the excuse that though it had been thought the work of Mercier "some of my subscribers thinking it

bore a strong resemblance to Hogarth, I at their request submitted it to public opinion." But, as Mr. Binyon points out, "It should be noted that the facsimile was not submitted to the public till Hogarth's signature *W. H. delin.* had been boldly added. Since the publication of Ireland's book in 1797, the drawing has generally passed as Hogarth's unchallenged, Mercier's name and work being little known; but the sole authority for the attribution is the fancy or wish of the subscribers just quoted, and as the style has no real resemblance to Hogarth's, the original and doubtless correct ascription of the drawing has here been restored." A good instance of the reckless manner in which attributions were bestowed, even in early days!

We now come to **William Hogarth,** the most popular and perhaps the greatest delineator of Life and Manners that this country has produced. It is probable, indeed, that he sacrificed a good deal of his artistic talent on the altar of this temple; though we need not quarrel with him here on that account.

Reynolds said of him that he had "stored his mind with infinite materials to explain and illustrate the domestic and familiar scenes of common life which were generally, and ought to have been always, the subject of his pencil" [i.e. brush]. But Hogarth's realism is not natural; it is theatrical. The Dutch painters drew back a curtain and showed us what was going on behind it; Hogarth rolls one up, having carefully arranged the tableau for the occasion. So when we look at the *March to Finchley,* or *The Election,*

or either of the *Progresses* or the *Marriages*, we feel that although we are confronted with a very realistic picture of those days, it is not a real one. Much as when we see on the hoardings the heroine bound and gagged in front of a runaway steam-roller, or denouncing the frock-coated villain in the face of a scandalised wedding party—we admit it as realistic, but know it not to be real.

But, however theatrical the effect, there is no doubt that its details were studied from actual life, and with an eye, a mind, and a hand like Hogarth's to produce them, the studies fall scarcely short of the finished production in their vivid realisation of the scenes and incidents amongst which he lived.

Sixteen of the sketches and finished drawings for the series of engravings called *Industry and Idleness* were purchased by the British Museum in 1896—exactly two and a half centuries after they were composed. In these we can see the vigour and certainty of his touch, and his extraordinary power of characterisation in all its freshness and originality, as it is impossible to do in the engraved work. And further, in the differences between the sketches (or even the finished drawings) and the prints, we have a valuable insight into his methods of composition, and the manner in which he adopted any modification that he thought would heighten the artistic—or more truly the theatrical —effect of the public performance.

These drawings are for the most part sketched out in pencil, then drawn boldly with a reed pen and washed with indian ink; they are all of

about the same size—about 9 × 12 inches. Four of them are finished drawings, which differ but little if at all from the print, but the others vary considerably both from each other and from the print. To quote the catalogue : " Some are first thoughts, freely sketched ; others represent more developed studies ; others, again, the final design made for transfer to the copper."

The first sketch for Plate IX, where the idle apprentice is betrayed by his female accomplice and taken in a night cellar, is a good example of the way in which Hogarth, after working out an idea for a scene, subsequently heightened the theatrical effect by purely theatrical means. The stage is set for a scene in a cellar—as is shown by the flight of steps rising at the back—and the nature and occupations of its habitués who are grouped in various parts of it may be taken in at a glance—the idle apprentice, occupying the centre foreground with a thief, who is dividing with him the spoils of a robbery. So far so good ; the situation is clear. But the only indication of the betrayal and capture of the idle one is a suggestion of two figures standing on the steps. The former is freely sketched, the latter merely indicated ; and it would almost seem that Hogarth felt the weakness of the idea before completing it, and abandoned it to think out something better. In the print we have the result—the watch are actually brought on the stage, descending the stairs ; and the woman points out Idle to them.

Now, to a mere artist—genius or not—the only consideration to be heeded in thus altering

the balance of the picture would have been to re-arrange the grouping in the foreground, from the point of view of composition. To the stage manager the change meant something much more. The entry of the watch changed the whole situation ; so much so, that we can almost imagine Hogarth being actually present from the time when the woman went to call the watch, and after abandoning his first idea, going over the subsequent events in his mind as he recalled them, and recording the situation as it became a few minutes later. Mark the changes. The confused rabble of people quarrelling, no sooner become aware of the approach of the watch, than they make their escape ; as does also the woman smoking a pipe. The soldier whom she was talking to disdains flight, but discreetly turns his face to the wall. The most startling effect, however, is that the corpse of a murdered man—probably the centre of the commotion amongst the escaped ones—is now left exposed, and must at all costs be concealed. It is being hastily thrust down a trap door.

In the drawing for Plate XI—*The Idle Apprentice Executed at Tyburn*—which is much more than a first sketch, several piquant touches are absent which appear in the print. In the former the apprentice is alone in the cart, being left to console himself with a prayer book, while the ordinary of Newgate follows in a coach, from the window of which he addresses the mob. In the print, a Wesleyan preacher is sitting with the condemned man, fervently exhorting him, while the ordinary in his coach is not even

WILLIAM HOGARTH.

THE INDUSTRIOUS APPRENTICE GIVING ALMS AT HIS WEDDING.

(*British Museum.*)

WILLIAM HOGARTH.

THE INDUSTRIOUS APPRENTICE AT CHURCH WITH HIS MASTER'S DAUGHTER.

(*British Museum.*)

To face p. 82.

troubling to moralise to the people, but is sitting staring about him. A wall thronged with people on the top is introduced, which is only roughly indicated in the drawing, and also a man letting loose a carrier pigeon.

Two of the drawings represent subjects which were not included in the series as printed. One is *The Industrious Apprentice when a Merchant Giving Money to his Parents*, the other *The Idle 'Prentice Stealing from his Mother*. As might be expected, the baser subject is the more fascinating. The scene is the outside of the mother's cook-shop, and while he half kneels for her to kiss him in saying good-bye, he passes a pot full of victuals (inscribed *Fowler's Cooke Shop*) behind his back to a confederate. Poor apprentice! his story is indeed a lesson. But just as Harrison Ainsworth always kept the sympathies of his readers on the side of his hero, Jack Sheppard, so Hogarth excites our pity for the wretched Idle by the very horror of all that befalls him. Sheer misery was never so forcibly depicted as in the picture of the garret where, ironically enough, he is presumed to be indulging in pleasure; sheer despair in the sight of him seated on his coffin in the cart; while in the earlier episode, when he is taken to sea to serve on a ship, we see an expression of awful terror on his face that tells us in a few strokes as much as we could learn from Wesley about the state of his conscience or from Smollett about the state of the navy.[1]

[1] Two or three more of the drawings for this series have been acquired since the catalogue was printed, which are no

A study for a portrait group, or "Conversation piece" (No. 17 in the *British Museum Catalogue*), takes us back to the earlier stages of Hogarth's artistic development, in which we can see the first traces of his desire to make pictures into scenes. This is a large drawing (13 × 17 inches), in pen and ink over red chalk, washed with indian ink and water-colours. The scene is a garden terrace, on which are grouped no less than ten figures, all of whom are represented, not as sitting for their portraits, but engaged in some occupation suitable to the occasion. On the right is seated a young widow, who is taking snuff from a gentleman standing behind her chair. A little girl with a ball in her hand approaches her and touches her arm. In the centre a lady is standing taking a necklace out of a box, while her maid is putting a ribbon in her hair. On the left a man is showing a picture to two of his friends, while a boy seated on a stool pats his dog and looks at the picture too. In the background is a servant girl, who is also looking at the picture with a gesture of lively admiration.

The portrait drawing of Simon, Lord Lovat (No. 22 in the *British Museum Catalogue*), is only another example of Hogarth's love of theatrical effect. It may be objected that this should rather have been included in Chapter I; but though it is undoubtedly true that Hogarth was a painter of portraits, he cannot be called a portrait painter in the accepted sense of the

less interesting than the foregoing. I regret that my attention was called to them too late to include more than this mention of them.

term. A portrait painter is content for people to sit to him. Hogarth required them to stand, walk, act, talk, or dance to him. In the present example we have nothing of the patron who commissions the artist to paint his portrait, and suffers himself to be sketched as one of the necessary inconveniences incidental to the process. The circumstances here are exceptional, even for Hogarth, but typical of his intense earnestness about any subject in which he felt a real interest. Lovat was a turncoat who had sided first with the Government and then with the Young Pretender, and when at last he was captured and brought to London for execution, in August 1746, Hogarth was so eager to draw him that he went to St. Albans to meet him on the road, and sketched him, as Lovat sat at the White Hart Inn "in full face, talking with a smile on his broad lips."

This drawing is in black and white chalk and stump, on drab paper (about 10 × 8 inches), and seems to be only a part of a larger study—perhaps a whole length of the seated figure. A similar portrait was etched by Hogarth; which represents Lord Lovat, seated, counting over the Highland clans on his fingers. An oil sketch of that portrait is now in the National Portrait Gallery.

A sheet of sketches, in indian ink and vermilion wash, at Lovat's trial is also in the British Museum, which is thus described in the catalogue:—

"In the centre at the top two studies of the Lord High Steward (Philip Yorke, Lord Hardwicke) at a table addressing the prisoner with lifted hand; opposite him in the right corner

Lovat standing between two warders, one hand thrust in his waistcoat, the other extended in explanatory gesture ; below, a little left, a similar study in which Lovat leans forward over the barrier as he speaks, and still lower down another similar study, but with three guards holding axes behind the prisoner. At the left of this last study two heralds holding maces. At the left upper corner of the sheet a standing man ; lower down a back view of the Judge and Counsel slightly sketched."

Four of the drawings, which are very badly engraved in Samuel Ireland's *Graphic Illustrations of Hogarth* under the title "Characters who frequented Button's Coffee-house about 1720," are also at the British Museum. These are all in indian ink and sepia, and of no greater size than about 5×7 inches. As Mr. Binyon points out in the catalogue, these can hardly belong to an earlier date than 1730, or even 1740 ; and the interest claimed for them by Ireland as being sketches of Pope, Addison, Garth, and others, is entirely fictitious. Nevertheless, they are extremely interesting as examples of Hogarth's habit of sketching whatever he saw—he is said to have been the inventor of the thumb-nail sketch—and in two of them we can see the same spirit at work as in the *Night Cellar*. I mean in the depicting of the same scene again after an interval of a few minutes. One is called *Draught Players Interrupted*, the other *A Game of Draughts Ended*. These, of course, are simply sketches, made for no special subject ; and the differences between them are accordingly no more

than the differences in the grouping which actually occurred at the time. Two of the figures are the same in both.

Two more of the items in the British Museum Catalogue deserve notice, namely (No. 31), a sketch-book containing seven of his drawings, among others, entitled, "An account of what seemed most remarkable in the five days' peregrination of the five following persons, viz. Messieurs. Tothall, Scott, Hogarth, Thornhill and Forrest. Begun on Saturday, May the 27th, 1732." This was published in 1782 with aquatint facsimile of the drawings.

No. 30, *The Sleeping Housewife*, has the interest of being signed and dated, "W. Hogarth, 1754."

If I have been over particular in describing these drawings of Hogarth, and made more than usually large drafts on Mr. Binyon's catalogue in doing so, it is because I cannot find in any modern work on Hogarth more than a casual reference to his draughtsmanship. It is only of late years that he has been seriously considered as a painter, so firmly are the public convinced that he was no more than moralist. Of his drawings there are none exhibited in any public gallery, and besides those at the British Museum, I do not know where any are to be found.

In drawing his outlines with a thick reed pen, as he usually did, he was probably influenced by his father-in-law, Sir James Thornhill, whose work I shall notice in Chapter VII. But while never attaining, and probably never wishing to attain, the classical smoothness of Thornhill's

outline, he gained immensely by the ruggedness and force of his own. Never stopping to flatter his models—I will not call them sitters—he "got them down" with surprising force. If any of his original studies for the characters in the *Progresses* came to light, they would indeed be a find.

In Esdaile's catalogue were the following, all of which, so far as I am aware, await discovery by fortunate collectors :—

Lot 1285. A series of small heads on 8 sheets.[1]
Lot 1286. Original design for the frontispiece to *Perspective.*
Lot 1287. Portrait of Mr. Martin, in crayons.
Lot 1288. Illustration to Molière's *Avare,* pen and indian ink. (This fetched by far the largest price—four and a half guineas !)
Lot 1289. A figure for the *Rake's Progress.*
Lot 1290. Design for a new order of architecture, in red chalk.
Lot 1291 and 2. Original designs for the second and third plates of *Marriage à la Mode.*

A large head of a woman in coloured chalks I found in a scrap-book which contained several very interesting early drawings, and Mr. Binyon attributes this to Hogarth.

Hogarth so completely dominates the art of his period, that no other names readily occur to fill the gap left by his death in 1764. Francis Hayman I shall notice in another chapter. To

[1] These are in the British Museum, but are considered by Mr. Binyon of doubtful authorship.

Joseph Highmore, who adopted Hogarth's plan of painting "Conversation pieces," is attributed a beautiful drawing in pencil, called *The Enraged Husband*. This was formerly in the Walpole Collection, and is now in the British Museum. It was reproduced in the Portfolio Monograph, No. 48. But within a dozen years of Hogarth's death, began to pour forth a plentiful stream of drawings of Life and Manners, which was to continue in full play for the next half-century. These were from the pen of Thomas Rowlandson, born in London in 1756; a pen far more facile, and (to my mind) directed by a genius not less than that of Hogarth or of any other British artist in this class of subject. Of course it is impossible to compare the drawings of Hogarth and Rowlandson, because they were produced for entirely different purposes. Those of Hogarth were merely notes and designs for compositions to be engraved or painted. Those of Rowlandson were themselves the completed article. Sometimes we come across beginnings, left unfinished. Sometimes, again, we find several replicas, varied or elaborated, of finished subjects. But rarely, if ever, do we find anything that can be called a study or sketch for something more finished.

The most highly prized of his drawings are those of *London Society*—brilliant groups of beautiful, if sometimes rather overblown ladies and beaux. One or two of these have fetched as much as £400, or more, in the auction rooms. The most neglected are his smaller and simpler scenes of life in the country, and these I shall

keep till a later chapter, "The Countryside." But between these two extremes we find every variety of human life and manners illustrated in a more or less comical vein.

The late F. G. Stephen, in an article in *The Portfolio* some years ago, demurred to the title of Joseph Grego's book, *Rowlandson the Caricaturist*, and headed his own article "Rowlandson the Humorist." For my part I would go a step farther, and call him "Rowlandson the Good-humorist," as a nearer approach to the man and his art. For while it is impossible not to see that his humour was a characteristic inseparable from his work, the public estimate of that work has suffered very greatly on that account, and many people still cannot see through the outer casing to the real strength and genius that lies beneath.

To those who know him only from his coarse caricatures, or even from the illustrations to *Dr. Syntax* and other books done for the publishers, this feeling is very natural, and is quite enough to "put one off" his work generally. If our first introduction to a man is in a boisterous company among whom he is perhaps the most boisterous, it may be long before we discover that he is really quite a seriously minded and lovable person. And even then we shall still be likely to notice, or be on the look out for, boisterous traits and tricks of manners, that under other circumstances would not have annoyed us, at any rate to the same extent. With Rowlandson, it is to be feared, the love of rotund forms, of large chins and gaping mouths, of huge and

ungainly hands, and his general air of a jolly great dog racing about with its tongue hanging out, will always blind a great many people to his real worth as an artist.

In a few examples here reproduced I have, accordingly, tried to select such as offend least in these characteristics. His style is so familiar that there is no need to display typical examples of it, or even the finest, and I have rather sought out those which exhibit him in some less known aspects. Mr. A. P. Oppé's exhaustive study recently published by *The Studio* renders it unnecessary to do more than this.

The number of his drawings still existing is incalculable. During the last few years a great number have gone to America, where a demand for them seems to have suddenly sprung up, perhaps prompted by the beautiful example, *A Review*, purchased by Mr. Roger Fry for the Metropolitan Museum, New York, some years ago.

For a little over half a century—his earliest work is dated 1774 and some of his latest 1825—Rowlandson was pouring out drawings of so much the same quality and technique, that it is difficult to date any of them without documentary evidence. Some of these he himself etched, but although he is said to have claimed that he had scraped as much copper as would sheathe a man-of-war, the etched drawings are a very small proportion of all those that are still in existence. It is said that at one period he painted portraits, but I have never come across or heard of any picture of his in oils, and apart from his

etchings, the whole of his works are, though mostly coloured with light washes of water-colour, actually drawings in outline, begun generally in pencil and finished with a reed pen filled with brownish ink. Could some freakish spirit in another world, where Rowlandson could sit and watch him, wind off these outlines in an endless thread, they would indeed fill a very large drum.

And yet I can recall less than a dozen that are hung in our public galleries, apart from those —none of the best quality, and on account of their subjects only—at the London Museum.

The two drawings reproduced on the opposite page, which we may call *The Auction* and *Flirtation*, are in several respects unlike Rowlandson's familiar style, and until fortified by Mr. Oppé's opinion, I hesitated to attribute them to him. The former, though equal to him in spirit and composition, seems to lack that roundness in the outlines which is so characteristic of Rowlandson, and to incline to straight and angular lines. The latter, which is a variant of a theme he often employed, was etched by him with the signature, "H. Wigstead, delin^{t}." The etching varies considerably from the drawing, and is more detailed. Wigstead was a friend of his, and companion on his travels, whose abilities as a draughtsman can hardly have been equal to those of Rowlandson. It is drawn with a thick pen and washed with indian ink, and its freedom and breadth inclined me to attribute it, before I knew of the etching, to one of the more considerable painters of the period.

Rowlandson seldom, if ever, painted in water-

THOMAS ROWLANDSON.

AN AUCTION.

THOMAS ROWLANDSON.

FLIRTATION.

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colour. He drew his outlines, and shaded them, after the original method, with a reed pen filled with a light brown ink, and coloured the drawings with flat washes of pale yellow, pink, and blue. Occasionally he used deeper colours, especially red ; but the most effective of his works are those that are slightly tinted and derive their strength from the outline, sometimes fine, but oftener thick. When drawing with a very fine pen, his touch is not so easily recognisable as in most of his work, and in one or two cases besides those above mentioned I have hesitated to pronounce an opinion.

The most noticeable characteristic about his work is the "roundness" in which he expresses everything he sees. A fine hard pen is less adapted for this than a soft thick one, and perhaps that is why he so seldom used it. Just as Chinese art differs from Japanese in this respect, giving an impression of ease and rotundity, contracted with the sharpness and angularity of the Japanese, so Rowlandson's objects always tend to give an idea of fatness and comfort. Often they go much too far in this direction, and in caricature they invariably exceed on the fat side. He lived in a gross age, when roast beef and old port were not stinted, and Charles James Fox was less remarkable for his fatness than William Pitt for his leanness. And Rowlandson's love of fatness was not confined to men and women only : everything he drew was fat, animal or vegetable. His horses, dogs, sheep, oxen and deer, are all well fed, and his trees are full of sap.

Henry William Bunbury, well known for the numerous prints of caricatures and fancy subjects, was "only an amateur"; and though many of his drawings are full of charm and of spirit, they betray the weakness and lack of continual training incident to that quality. In his smaller sketches of figures this is less noticeable; but in his larger drawings the pen-work is stilted and the colouring crude, and it is only their general "jolliness" that pulls them together. I am referring chiefly to several examples acquired by the British Museum in 1900, and to a few others of the same sort which I have seen elsewhere.

In a later chapter, "Classical and Romantic Subjects," and again in its sequal "Book Illustrations," are the names of many draughtsmen who incidentally contributed to the subject of this one; such as Wheatley and Stothard, to mention no others. The immense number of prints of all sorts of "Fancy Subjects," include many domestic scenes and incidents, however highly coloured by sentiment, that contribute to our knowledge of the life and manners of the Georgian period something that we should never learn from family portraits.

III

TOPOGRAPHICAL DRAWINGS

CHAPTER III

TOPOGRAPHICAL DRAWINGS

A ROUGH and ready classification of English drawings, for the convenience of the collector when he has amassed any considerable number, divides them into the same three classes as paintings, namely, portraits, landscapes, and "history," or subjects. The third is naturally the most susceptible to subdivision; but the second, although often split up according to the materials employed—pen, pencil, chalk, monochrome, or water-colour—is usually called "landscape" by way of distinction, regardless of one or two considerations which, though not applicable to pictures, are of interest to students and collectors of drawings. For this reason I have ventured upon the somewhat hazardous attempt to distinguish topographical from landscape drawings by devoting separate chapters to them, leaving the drawings of landscape painters to a third.

I say "hazardous," not because the distinction is, in itself, one that can be disputed, or that need not be drawn, but because, owing to the varied activities of most of the artists, there is often some difficulty in tracing it with sufficient precision to avoid overlapping and difference of opinion.

Let us begin by taking an extreme rather than a typical example of each—a topographical drawing, a landscape drawing, and a landscape painter's drawing—to show what I mean :—

1. Any of the hundreds of drawings of places and subjects of interest, in several English counties, in pen and monochrome, done for Sir Ralph Payne by Samuel Hieronymus Grimm and now preserved in several large volumes in the Department of Manuscripts at the British Museum.

2. A view in Elba, in water-colour, by John Robert Cozens, at the South Kensington Museum.

3. A landscape study in black and white chalk, by Gainsborough, at the Tate Gallery.

Now, in the first of these examples we have little more than a mere record or rendering of the external aspect of some particular place. In the second—which, it must be admitted, is "the finished article," and is only called a drawing because it is not in oils—the name of the place is of no consequence. It is the beauty of the scene, not its name or its association, that has inspired the artist.

In the third we find the free play of the mind and hand of a great painter, untrammelled by the limitations of a heavier and more severe expression when working with oil-paint on canvas.

Obviously there must be a wide difference between drawings produced under such different stimuli. At the same time, as these are extreme rather than typical examples, it is equally obvious that the three subdivisions may become less apparent with circumstances, and at the other

end of the scale may not only approach, but actually overlap and intermingle. But if the collection of drawings implies the study of them, and not merely their acquisition, these distinctions are of no less interest and delight than of importance.

The most that can be said against them, I think, is that they are often difficult and sometimes impossible to maintain. That may be quite true; but if in the growth of a school various tendencies merge and sometimes disappear under later influences, is that any good reason for ignoring them as separate factors in the history of the school? And will there not always be individuals who defy classification, and break bounds in one direction or another, or all? But as we have taken extreme examples on one side, let us take them on the other.

1. Thomas Girtin, who was certainly the equal of Turner, when he died aged only twenty-seven, might have become an equally wonderful landscape painter. But all the work that he actually did was essentially topographical. For our classification, then, he clearly ought to come in with the topographical draughtsmen; but surely it is more reasonable to assume that his pre-eminence in this direction was only preliminary to a vastly wider achievement, as was that of Turner, his equal and contemporary.

2. Cotman, Cox and De Wint were all three of them landscape painters; but they were also water-colourists, and therefore their drawings are not (as are those of Gainsborough or Constable) executed in a medium different from that habitually

used by them in their finished productions. The technical differences between the old water-colours and pictures in oil-paint were so great that it is no wonder that until the nineteenth century few artists ever practised both. With hardly any exception neither Wilson nor Gainsborough nor Crome ever worked in water-colour; Constable seldom, and quite differently from the regular water-colourists.

Cotman would have liked to be a painter in oils, but could not afford to, and took to water-colour and to teaching water-colour drawing, simply to earn a living. De Wint occasionally painted in oils, but nearly all his best work is in water-colour. Cox was more "amphibious," even inclining more to oil painting than water-colour; and his water-colours have accordingly more the character of pictures than those of the other two, especially in his later life.

These three, then, according to our classification, are rather landscape draughtsmen than landscape painters. Water-colour was their principal medium of expression, and the use of water-colour characterises their drawings even when in chalk or pencil. Still, the distinction is not so clear as in the case of men like Taverner or Alexander and John Cozens, who never painted in oils at all.

3. But what about topography? All three of them, Cox, Cotman and De Wint, took their landscape subjects exclusively from "places" in England, with a few excursions into France. Most, if not all, of their pieces are actually named or easily recognisable as particular "places."

What is it that takes them out of the category of topography? The answer is that, although occasionally they may have been commissioned to make a drawing of a particular place, their real object was in making, not views, but pictures, or studies of the beauties they saw in Nature, regardless of any feeling of interest in what the place might be: and the value of their work, accordingly, is not to be rated on account of its interest as a representation of a particular place, but as a work of art.

With a man like Cotman, especially, who excelled in the drawing of ancient buildings, and who besides, being a drawing master, made hundreds of drawings for the instruction of his pupils, the distinction is often hard to maintain. And similarly, with the topographers, the work of Sandby, Hearne, Dayes, and especially Girtin, transcends the bounds of mere topographical drawing. But underneath it all the distinction exists, and, especially by the student and collector, should not be lost sight of.

It may here be observed that England a hundred and fifty years ago was peculiarly well stocked with monastic buildings, which, partly owing to adaptation to other uses and partly to sheer decay, had been invested by Time with every element of the picturesque. But for the Reformation, most of such buildings would probably have been as uninteresting as Windsor Castle has been rendered by continual "restoration," or as the interior of the great majority of our parish churches. Within the last century many a beautiful old building has either been

demolished or robbed by restoration of every vestige of the picturesque, as may be seen from countless examples from the sympathetic hands of Hearne, Cotman, Girtin, Turner, and still later artists. The invention of gunpowder, again, if it did nothing else for art, certainly preserved our Norman castles from modern restoration; and the dissolution of the monasteries was an equally effective agent in etherealising the mediæval abbeys and priories. For this reason, while the English country was—as we shall see—neglected as "landscape" by the earlier artists in favour of the supposedly more romantic beauties of Italy and other foreign countries, its picturesque ruins were resorted to even by artists like Girtin and Turner rather in the spirit of landscape than of mere topography. That is another factor that sometimes blurs the line between the two classes.

I put topography first because there is really no doubt that it was the earliest and—perhaps for that reason only—the principal source from which landscape drawing of every sort in this country originated. That it was not the only source may be readily admitted. But, as I shall show in the next chapter, English landscape was considered too tame and commonplace for the study of an artist, in the days when its wilder beauties were practically inaccessible, and when the only pictures available for inspiration were those of artists working in Italy, pictures of mountain crags and torrents. It was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that the fashion for Dutch pictures came in, and the

simple scenery of southern and eastern England was found worthy of regard. On the other hand, there appears to have arisen soon after the Reformation a very pronounced desire among the English people to know something about their own country—its antiquities, local characteristics, and its fine parks and mansions; and the topographical writers who responded to this desire were neither few nor obscure.

First there was Leland who held the unique post of "King's Antiquary," and whose "Itinerary," written by him in the reign of Henry VIII, fills nine volumes in a modern edition. Then Camden, whose *Britannia* was first published in 1586, and was so popular that it soon went through several editions. Then Dr. Stukeley, a most determined antiquary, in the earlier years of the eighteenth century; and before the close of it the well-known Pennant. Then, too, there were the county histories, the earliest of which, Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, was published with many engravings by Hollar in 1656. All of these were primarily antiquarian, but they were the original sources of artistic topography.

How far these were causes, and how far effects, of the demand for topographical drawings, it is needless to inquire. But the fact remains that whereas there was not until the latter half of the eighteenth century any English landscape drawing, there was a regular output, of one sort and another, of topographical drawings from at least an early a date as that of the arrival in England in 1635 of **Wenceslaus Hollar.**

This famous engraver was brought to England

from Prague by Thomas Howard, Lord Arundel. He fought with the Royalists, was taken prisoner, and escaped to Antwerp in 1645. In 1652 he returned to England, and was working here until he was sent by the Government to Tangier in 1669.

In 1647 was born of a good old English family, in the north of England, **Francis Place.** He was articled to an attorney in Gray's Inn, but on the outbreak of the Plague returned to York. He was a friend, but not, he says, pupil of Hollar.

Both Hollar and Place are better known as engravers than as draughtsmen. The former is, of course, world-famous, and the latter is known to the *cognoscenti*, if to no one else, as one of the very earliest of English mezzotinters. But both of them have left a considerable number of drawings which, until a better acquaintance with the minor arts of their own and the preceding period is possible, may be considered the beginning of topographical drawing in this country.

Seven out of the numerous drawings by Hollar at the British Museum are landscapes, or rather "views." That is to say, they are only incidentally landscape drawings, being primarily representations of architectural subjects, namely, the Tower of London, Whitehall, Westminster, Richmond Palace, Gravesend, Queenborough and Starborough Castles respectively. But in them we perhaps trace part of the origin of landscape drawing in this country, much as in the backgrounds of subject or portrait pictures we see the beginnings of landscape painting.

WENCESLAUS HOLLAR.

THE TOWER OF LONDON.

(*British Museum.*)

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In the views of Westminster and Gravesend, indeed, there is no central object. The former, which is taken from the river bank at Lambeth, is a general prospect of the city, with the river covered with boats as a foreground. In the latter the view is from the southern shore which rises on the left into low hills with bushes above a broad stretch of sands, on which appear a horse and cart and some figures.

All these are executed in pen, with light water-colour or sepia wash. They are all of about the same size, 4 × 12 inches or thereabouts. They are, of course, an engraver's drawings, and being inscribed with the names of the places, are topographical. That is to say, they are objective, not subjective. Gainsborough, as we shall see, would draw a glade or a hill without caring enough for what was the name of it or where it was, to leave any record. Hollar sat down and drew a castle or a palace because it was Queenborough or Whitehall, and he wanted a record of it or knew that somebody else did. There could have been no sense of a desire to draw landscape simply because he thought it beautiful. All the beauty of his drawings is in his masterly way of recording what he saw.

Much the same must be said of the work of Francis Place, of whose topographical drawings in the north of England there are about forty examples at the British Museum. Some of these are not much more than actual delineations of places, such as Hull, York and Bridlington, without any attempt at composition. But there are others in which he proves himself a very

capable imitator of his greater friend. I have a slight pen-and-ink sketch of a ruin, said to be Dimsdale, his native place, which is quite a beautiful drawing and very much in the manner of Hollar.

To the Walpole Society's latest volume Mr. H. M. Hake has contributed a very interesting article on Place, quoting contemporary notices of him in correspondence, and reproducing several of the best of his drawings from the British Museum. It was certainly time that his work was rescued from oblivion, for there is no doubt as to its fine quality, and it is extremely probable that a considerable amount of it is extant but unrecognised.

Contemporary with Place was Leonard Kuyff, who drew the wonderfully accurate bird's-eye views of country seats which were engraved by Kip and published in a large volume generally known as "Kip's Views." It is quite possible that some of the original drawings for these may come to light, in the general turnover of country houses, and others for somewhat similar publications.

In 1714 was published *Britannia Illustrata*, with views of country seats, to which and other publications, as Mr. C. E. Hughes points out in his little book on *Old English Water-colours*, may be traced the further development of topographical drawing. Originally, that is to say, drawings were made for the delectation of the nobility and gentry and their followers, all for the express purpose of being engraved; but gradually the practice extended to castles, abbeys,

FRANCIS PLACE.

BRIDGE OVER THE OUSE AT YORK.

(*British Museum.*)

FRANCIS PLACE.

RICHMOND CASTLE, YORKSHIRE.

(*British Museum.*)

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and other interesting features in the landscape, and the original drawing began to have a certain value of its own, whether it happened to be engraved or not. In course of time, water-colour proved so suitable for this class of drawing, being capable—unlike oil painting—of employment in the open and with very little trouble in the way of transport, that the greatest part of the earlier water-colour drawings left us are essentially topographical rather than landscape drawings.

This practical consideration of the portability of water-colour materials has not, I think, been sufficiently considered in tracing the origins of the British Water-colour School. We find a very significant proof of it in the earliest use of water-colours by an Englishman of which any record survives, namely an album at the British Museum of drawings by George White, inscribed as follows: "The pictures of sundry things collected and counterfeited according to the truth in the voyage made by Sir Walter Raleigh, Knight, for the discovery of La Virginea. In the 27th yeare of the most happie reigne of our Soveraigne Lady Queene Elizabeth and in the yeare of our Lord God 1585."

The earliest regular practitioner in water-colours, as it happened, was William Taverner; and his work is, to a certain extent, topographical; but in spirit it was that of a landscape artist, and I shall therefore reserve the mention of it to the next chapter.

Paul Sandby, born at Nottingham in 1725, may be regarded as the real founder of the topographical side of English water-colour art, and

has accordingly been called "the father of water-colour art," a distinction which we need not grudge him so long as we do not forget that it also had a mother. We must not press the metaphor too closely, because although there is no dispute, in this case, as to the paternity, the mother's side, that is to say the feeling for landscape, is undeniably more vague and mysterious.

Certainly we know of no one who was touring the country with a water-colour equipment as early as 1750, when we find Paul in Edinburgh, except his elder brother **Thomas Sandby,** by whom there is a drawing of Nottingham, in the Museum there, dated 1742. Both brothers were taken into the Government drawing office, and Paul was sent to the north of Scotland on the survey of roads. I once had a water-colour drawing of Appin—I wish I knew what had become of it—which, from its archaic character, I suspect may have been one of Sandby's achievements on this occasion. Thomas has left a certain amount of work—for example, a very charming view of the Piazza in Covent Garden, with some figures, which is at the British Museum; and some of it very likely passes for his brother's. But the works of Paul, extending as they do over a period of half a century (he lived till 1809) are so numerous and, within their natural limits, so varied, that it is no wonder that they swamp, and possibly sometimes absorb, those of his brother.

At his best, Sandby is very good, and very attractive; his light, fresh colouring and his

THOMAS SANDBY.

COVENT GARDEN.

(*British Museum.*)

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naïve little groups of figures add a peculiar charm to what is already well composed and judiciously put down. On the other hand, the series of monochrome drawings, chiefly of buildings, in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House (which, I suppose, are early), and many of his large, later views in and about Windsor, which I have seen here and there, are much less attractive than is a great deal of the work of his less famous contemporaries ; and there is a great deal of difference between a bright Sandby and a dull one.

Paul Sandby's name is almost as popular with the forgers as that of David Cox. A year or two ago my nephew Richard Sunderland sold the whole of the drawings of his great-grandfather, Thomas Sunderland, who was a Lancashire squire, and probably a friend and pupil of Joseph Farington. They were mostly views and landscape compositions in monochrome, and by no means inferior to the work of some of the professional artists of his time. But it was certainly a shock to me to be offered a batch of them, not many months later, all boldly signed, "P. Sandby."

At the same time, from the variety and the unequal quality of the large number of his sketches at the British Museum, it is probable that an attribution to Sandby is very often justifiable in the case of a good many of the anonymous drawings one comes across in the dealers' portfolios. In his topographical work his most characteristic pieces are pleasantly coloured with light blue and green and a little pink ; the foliage drawn with a rather fussy and

niggling touch, and the building and figures put in with a fine pen. In his studies of landscape he is much freer, but not very successful; they are rather messy and unimpressive. One of them was formerly attributed to Gainsborough, having probably been an attempt at imitation; but Sandby was not a landscape painter, and we should not expect more from him than the peculiar charm with which he has invested topographical drawing. As a draughtsman he was decidedly inferior to many of his less popular contemporaries, and we admire him rather for telling us so pleasantly what he saw than what he felt.

Two or three albums at the Museum are filled with his little drawings of various figures, both single and in groups, which are well worth studying. Of these, the earliest, some of them done in Edinburgh in 1750, are better than the later ones—for example the group of his grandchildren—while the sketch for a frontispiece to *The First Part of London Cries*, dated 1760, is as able as anything of the period.

Samuel Hieronymus Grimm was born at Burgdorf in Switzerland in 1733, but settled in England, where he did more topographical drawings than any Englishman. From about 1775 to 1785 he was employed by Sir Ralph Kaye to roam over almost the whole of England making drawings of places, and even objects, of interest, including many architectural details, tombs, etc. These are now in the British Museum, in twelve large volumes—not with the prints and drawings, but in the Department of Manuscripts. Certainly

there is only a small proportion of them which is of artistic interest, but if his fame rested on these alone it would be worth mentioning him. They are all done with a pen and washed with indian ink, and occasionally we find something that is quite comparable with the work of his better-known contemporaries. Their chief defect is in the absence not only of colours, which we rather look for in this sort of work, but of figures.

At his best and freest, Grimm compares very well with Paul Sandby, to whom very probably a good many of his pieces are attributed. I have one of his large finished water-colours, Bolsover Castle, which is charmingly coloured, and full of light and atmosphere.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, topography developed a strong leaning to antiquarianism. Three of the most accomplished water-colourists, Edward Dayes, Thomas Hearne, and Thomas Girtin, were actively, if not principally, engaged at this period in touring various parts of England for the purpose of making drawings of old buildings, for which a landscape setting was a minor consideration. Turner was also to some extent involved in this activity, but we need not say more than this about him for the present.

In 1786 a young amateur, James Moore, published " A List of Abbeys, Priories, and other Religious Houses, Castles, etc., in England and Wales, collected from Dugdale, etc., etc.," which was followed in 1792 by " Monastic Remains of Ancient Castles in England and Wales. Drawn on the spot by James Moore, Esq., F.A.S., and

executed in aquatinta by G. I. Parkyns, Esq.," and in 1794 by " Twenty-five Views in the Southern Part of Scotland from a collection of drawings made by James Moore, Esq., F.A.S., in the year 1792." These publications are not in themselves of any particular interest to collectors, but the story behind them is extremely interesting. In the Walpole Society's Volume V, Mr. C. F. Bell has brought to light a great many of the facts concerning it, which are extremely important. It appears that Moore was a pupil of George Robertson, some of whose landscape drawings may be seen at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. But Moore was a very poor performer, and few, if any, of his own drawings were actually reproduced by the engravers. What happened appears to be that Dayes or Girtin re-drew Moore's sketches; probably in some cases they drew the same building at the same time as Moore, but the fact remains that a great many drawings of this period were inspired by Moore's sketches and their authorship is uncertain. Some may be Girtin's. Others are known to be by J. C. Barrow, G. I. Parkyns, George Robertson, and Edward Dayes.

As artists, the two finest of the topographists in water-colour were Thomas Hearne and Edward Dayes. The former is best known for his series of castles, abbeys, etc., engraved by William Byrne and others and published in 1807. The latter was a man of more varied attainments, though inferior to Hearne as a draughtsman, and besides producing views and figure subjects, he was a member of the Philosophical Society

SAMUEL HIERONYMUS GRIMM.
LINCOLN CATHEDRAL FROM THE NORTH.

THOMAS HEARNE.
HALESOWEN PRIORY.

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and wrote one or two books. From one of these, published shortly after his death in 1804, I take the following extract to show the spirit in which his topographical work was undertaken :—

" Roche Abbey.—The day being particularly fine, everything appeared to be alive around this venerable remain ; parties of pleasure were taking their repast upon the grass ; others were wandering leisurely in the shade, to avoid the extreme heat ; and occasionally flitted past a female figure or two, whose white and expanded drapery flowing after them in easy undulating folds, made them appear to skim along like sylphs. They must be cold-hearted mortals who could think much of any trouble that would enable them to enjoy such an assemblage of rich and fascinating views as this place abounds with. Advancing up one of the walks, my eye was caught by a most beautiful effect of light and shade ; indeed, the great interest of the view arose out of it entirely. It was one of those fortunate incidental combinations that the artist is so anxious to preserve. The walk in which I stood was dark ; its trees formed the foreground, and hung pendulous over the scene, just clearing the objects, in part from the sky. Beyond appeared a Gothic gate, highly illuminated by the setting sun, the recess of the gate being quite dark ; a cart and two or three figures were seen just touched by the evening ray, sparkling against it in the most lively and magical manner.

" While busy in securing the transitory beauties of this scene, a stranger asked permission to sit

down by me to sketch. He had been much perplexed, he said, with the dark under the arch of the gate, to know how to force it back; to obtain which end he had made the trees on the foreground very black; but this had made his sketch muddy and heavy. I observed that he should have left the recess the darkest, as it appeared in Nature, and all would have been well; as neither light nor dark had in themselves the power to advance in a picture. Besides, he must recollect what Sir Joshua Reynolds had somewhere observed, 'that the best effect would not result from the strongest dark being the foreground, but the contrary.' The strongest relief will often be obtained by the great dark being thrown into the middle distance, and perhaps the most natural. A young lady once asked me 'if a landscape could be made without a tree in the corner?' She might have put the same query of dark foreground. I never think of 'a tree in the corner' but it makes me tremble for the arts, when thus subjected to the unnatural caprices of bad taste."

IV

LANDSCAPE DRAWINGS

CHAPTER IV

LANDSCAPE DRAWINGS

In topographical drawing, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, the predominant interest is in the place. A topographical drawing is primarily a "view"—a word which has been somewhat degraded by our great-aunts but which, nevertheless, is of good origin—*veduta*, as the eighteenth-century Italian prints remind us. We have seen, too, how greatly the suitability of water-colour to the purposes of the touring artist, and the charming effects they found they could produce with it, gave a great stimulus not only to the production of this class of subject, but also to the employment of this medium in preference to the more substantial and immovable apparatus of oil painting.

The work of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century water-colourists as a whole is a subject that requires a volume to itself, and it would be unfair to it and to the present volume alike to treat it as a mere chapter in a general survey of drawings of all sorts. But just in the same way as the painters made drawings, as distinct from their finished products, so did the water-colourists. Every artist, as I began by saying,

makes drawings. The only thing is that the distinction I tried to emphasise between the drawing and the finished product is, in the case of water-colours, rather more difficult to draw; the line becomes fainter and often disappears altogether. But we can still follow it more or less clearly with the mind's eye. Even the equator is only an "imaginary line."

With the landscape painters the distinction is perfectly clear, and for that reason alone I should leave the consideration of their drawings to another chapter, only glancing in the present at such of the work of the water-colourists as appears to be rather in the nature of sketches and studies than those which they sent for exhibition. Even this limitation, we shall see, is of a somewhat hazy character, and difficult to uphold. I only wish to make it clear that I am not attempting to deal with much more than the chips, so to speak, from the water-colourists' workshops.

Between landscape, again, and topographical subjects, the distinction is no less variable and uncertain on occasions, though fundamentally it is true. The former are subjective, the latter objective. Landscape is not merely the land; it is the land rendered in terms of art. The word has acquired a physical meaning in ordinary language, but it was primarily a term of art. A view, on the other hand, is a physical experience but has become a term of art. In other words, the topographical draughtsman draws what he sees, and incidentally produces a work of art; the landscape artist draws what he feels and incidentally produces a landscape.

The earliest examples of the use of the word "landscape" given in the New English Dictionary are interesting in this connection. It means really *land shape*, being introduced into our language from the Dutch. First, in 1603, comes Joshua Sylvester—

> The cunning painter
> Limning a landscape, various, rich, and rare.

Next, Ben Jonson, in 1605, in his stage directions for a masque—"First for the scene was drawn a landschap consisting of small woods." A little later, in a poem appended to Guillim's *Display of Heraldry*, we have—

> As in a curious landschape oft we see
> Nature so followed as we think 'tis she.

And in 1656, George Blount defines what is meant by landscape in somewhat startling terms, thus :—

> Landskip, Parergon, Paisage or By-work, which is an expressing of the land by hills, woods, castles, valleys, rivers, cities, &c., as far as may be showed in one horizon. All that which in a picture is not of the body or argument thereof is landskip, parergon, or by-work.

In all three of these examples of the earliest use of the word in England it will be noticed that it is as a rendering of the land in art, not the land itself.

We may safely say that there was no landscape painting in this country, except perhaps in the sense of "by work," as early as 1603. Sylvester was only translating a French author, Du Barlas, who would be alluding to Dutch or

Italian pictures of his time. But, as it happens by the greatest of good luck, a drawing of the very landscape mentioned by Ben Jonson in 1605 was actually in existence when he wrote, and is actually in existence now. By one of those fascinating chances that sometimes make one think that the spirits of the old people guide one to the place, I came upon it only a couple of days after consulting the dictionary. It is a rough, free sketch in pen on a largish sheet of white paper, with a few figures faintly indicated, and it is inscribed by the artist, "Landscape of small woods, and here and there a void place filled with huntings."

This was **Inigo Jones,** the great architect, born near Smithfield in 1572. At Chatsworth are several volumes filled with his designs for the scenery and costumes of many of the masques performed at Court from the accession of James I., to about 1640, some of which the Duke of Devonshire is allowing to be reproduced in a forthcoming volume of the Walpole Society, and which by the courtesy of Mr. H. M. Hake was given a sight of when in his custody.

"There is no certain account in what manner he passed his younger years," says the writer of a memoir of the life of Inigo Jones prefixed to his book on Stonehenge, some time after his death, "or where or by whom he was brought up. . . . This, indeed, we know, that he was early distinguished by his inclination to drawing or designing, and was particularly taken notice of for his skill in the practice of landscape painting." This is certainly very surprising, and

still more interesting is a passage, hastily jotted down by George Vertue in Additional MS. 23,069. "His fancy led him to paint landskap in which he might make tolerable progress before he travelled which as he says (before his Stonehenge) that in his younger days he had been in Italy enabled him to make a better choice of his studies and undoubtedly a better progress. The innumerable fine views, ruins, mountains, rocks, waters, abound everywhere with so much beautiful variety in those countries that a young painter that will apply himself to that kind of study has everywhere fine models in Nature to follow which most certainly enrich his mind as well as his pictures."

Neither of these passages throws a certain light on the very interesting question, how far, if at all, Jones's landscape studies progressed before visiting Italy. But from the latter, it seems to have been taken for granted that England was not worth the consideration of anyone who aspired to be a "landscape painter." Gainsborough was, in fact, the first to dispel this illusion.

One of the unkindest things one can say about a modern landscape painter's work is that it suggests the scene painter's, and I should hesitate to claim a theatrical origin for landscape art in this country. But there are men like Craig and Fraser in our day whose influence has yet to be felt by succeeding generations, and Inigo Jones himself was not a scene painter in the modern sense of the term. But he was clearly a draughtsman, and to his professional work he

brought all the resources of a great genius. It is therefore not surprising to recognise in this and other of his landscape sketches for scenery, something with which the manner and spirit of some of the later landscape painters is more akin than with the topographical drawings of Hollar and Place. After all, a masque was a poetical as well as a theatrical production. It is significant, perhaps, that a century and a half later another of our great architects, Robert Adam, found an outlet for some of the "by work" of his genius in some very remarkable landscape drawings.

It is possible that some of the older landscape sketches and figure studies too, that one finds in the dealers' portfolios, may be by Inigo Jones, as they were very rough-and-ready notes, designed only for practical purposes, and without being able to refer them to any particular occasion they might easily be neglected.

With the exception of one or two examples by Van Dyck at the British Museum, in some of which water-colour is used, I do not know of any other landscape drawings in this country until the time of George II. One by Lely is mentioned in the Esdaile sale in 1838, and occasionally one comes across little scraps which are apparently of the seventeenth century, but without any clue as to their origin.

In 1703 was born **William Taverner,** who, as I observed in the last chapter, appears to have been the earliest regular practitioner in water-colours. Though it is, of course, quite possible that he did not fully develop the practice until after he was forty years old, when he may have

come under the influence of Alexander Cozens. His father was a dramatist, author of *The Faithless Bride of Granada, The Female Advocate, or the Frantic Stockjobber.* His grandfather, Jeremy Taverner, was a portrait painter from whom, perhaps, William acquired his interest in drawing; for he was not a professional artist, but a proctor in Doctors' Commons. He seems to have been influenced by Claude and the Italian landscape painters, whose works he may have seen, rather than by any desire to emulate Hollar or Place. One of his landscape compositions is at South Kensington, which is a typical example of one kind of his drawings, while another kind is of actual scenes, but rendered in terms of painting rather than of drawing, such as *Chelsea from the Battersea Shore,* reproduced in my book on Chelsea Old Church. Another, inscribed *Near Camberwell,* a flat expanse of heath without any buildings or figures, is in Mr. A. P. Oppé's collection.

Another very early water-colourist—he died before 1760—was John Skelton, of whose work Mr. Edward Coles has a good example, one of a series of large woodland scenes, nominally of Greenwich Park, but obviously idealised. A mountain peak in the background proves the influence of the Italian school, as well as the spirit of landscape as distinct from topography.

Alexander Cozens came to England in 1746 from Rome, whither he had been sent by Peter the Great to study. His father was for some time resident in Russia, but the interest taken in the lad by the Czar was magnified by the

English into being literally paternal, and it is only lately that the myth has been exploded. His methods both of drawing and of teaching, in both of which occupations he was busily employed here till his death in 1786, may have lent colour to the story of his not being entirely English ; and it is also to be remembered that his powers were fully developed before he came under any English influence in his art, unless perhaps that of Richard Wilson when in Rome.

Accordingly, we find in his drawings no perceptible trace of the objective, topographical style, and no difficulty in recognising them at a first glance as his and nobody else's. I remember one that I purchased some years ago had "Alexander" written on the back of it in pencil, probably by a collector, to signify that it was his and not his son John Robert's ; the dealer was under the impression that it was by William Alexander, and I did not undeceive him. A great many of them, however, are still on his own mounts, with his signature, "Alex. Cozens" written half on the drawing and half on the mount. They are very numerous, and until quite recently they might be had very cheap ; for being for the most part in sepia or indian ink on dark yellow paper, they have not the superficial attraction of a Sandby or a Dayes in colours.

Unlike his father, **John Robert Cozens** has left no sketches or studies—at least I have never seen or heard of any—that fall short of the "finished production." Rather, like the bird of Paradise, he seems to be only known in ethereal

ALEXANDER COZENS.

LANDSCAPE.

ALEXANDER COZENS.

MOUNTAINS.

To face p. 124.

flight, in the cool region of the upper atmosphere, far above the heads of his earthly contemporaries. Few of his drawings are less than 14 × 20 inches, and they are all executed in the broadest, simplest manner, with the smallest variety of colours. In 1776 he went to Italy, and returned with a series of Swiss mountain landscapes, most of which are now in the British Museum. A few of them, however, Herbert Horne was lucky enough to acquire, together with free copies of them made by Turner in his early days at Dr. Monro's. These were exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1916. Another series of subjects in and around Rome is well represented in the Dyce Collection at South Kensington, of which one or two of the most attractive, including the most beautiful *Tomb of the Horatii and Curatii*, are hung in the galleries. In all, the Victoria and Albert Museum have over thirty examples, only one of which, by the by, is an English landscape.

Although these are precisely labelled with date and place, no one could think of them as topographical drawings. "Pure poetry" is what Constable called them; and their influence on Turner must have been decisive; showing him, not how he ought to render Nature, but how much Nature had to render to an artist who wooed her as only an artist could.

Since writing the above, I have seen half a dozen of this artist's sketch-books, opened to show his original drawings, in pencil, for as many of the large water-colours in the superb exhibition last January at the Burlington Fine Arts Club.

Rather than amend my opening sentence, I will ask the reader to turn back to it ; for the recent discovery of these sketches, though in cold fact contradicting what I wrote, is in effect a corroboration of it. For there is such an immense distance between these bare pencil jottings and the marvellous creations in which they resulted, that I am sure that, for my own part, I should never have even looked at them twice had I come upon them loose in a dealer's portfolio. To my eye they present nothing beyond a prosaic record of a view. I can discern nothing in them of the promise they were destined to fulfil. They seem to me to imply that the process which in other artists gives us so much that is of value and delight in a drawing as a preparation for the finished work, was conducted by Cozens entirely within himself, and never committed to paper.

Of more than general interest to collectors of old landscape drawings and sketches is the name of **Dr. Thomas Monro** ; for he was not only himself a very accomplished draughtsman, but is well known for his practical encouragement of most of the rising genius in the earliest years of the last century. At his London house, 8 Adelphi Terrace—I quote from Mr. A. K. Sabin's introduction to a catalogue of an exhibition of his drawings at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1917—he started what was practically an academy for promising young artists. Turner, Girtin, De Wint, Varley, Cristall, Edridge Glover, Cotman, Francia, and William Hunt were among the students who worked under his friendly instruction. When talking in

later life to David Roberts, Turner said, "Girtin and I have often walked to Bushey and back (one of his two country houses) to make drawings for good Doctor Monro at half a crown apiece and a supper." After his death, in 1833, his collection was sold at Christie's, when Turner is believed to have bought back many drawings by himself which the doctor had acquired from time to time.

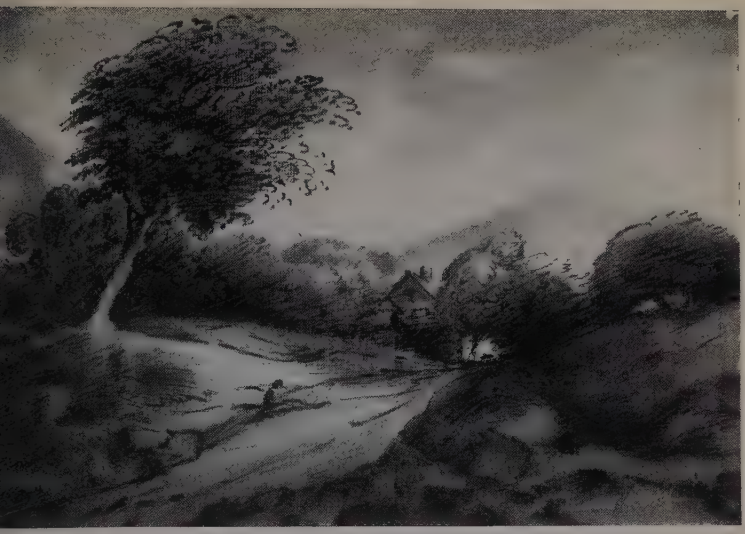
However that may be, it seems probable that Dr. Monro's portfolios must have contained a great many of the early sketches of the artists above mentioned; and that consequently a considerable number of them may still be "kicking about," uncared for and unrecognised. A few years ago there was another sale—at Messrs. Puttick and Simpson's—of several lots which were undoubtedly a portion of Dr. Monro's collection; and besides many drawings which were unquestionably his own, there were a great many by other hands—most of them very slight. Some of these were by his grandson, Henry Monro, and one or two by Millicent Monro, dated as late as 1869. Had the whole collection been purchased for a museum in 1833, it is most probable that by this time it would have been scientifically sifted, and much accurate information been obtained as to the early work of some of the pupils. As it is, the collector should always be on the look out for any scrap of drawing which bears any traces or indications of having emanated from the Monro seminary.

From Dr. Monro's own hand I reproduce a typical example (*Facing p.* 128) which I bought

many years ago for several shillings, on the chance of its being a Gainsborough as it was called. Herbert Horne, some time afterwards, assured me it was by Hoppner; I have forgotten his reason for this attribution, but until quite lately, when better evidence was forthcoming, I was not alone in supposing that these drawings of Monro were by Hoppner.

Monro was a pupil of John Laporte, and is reputed to have been a friend and sketching companion of Gainsborough; certainly his treatment of foliage, sometimes in round and sometimes in straight strokes, might be reminiscent of both, though his very blunt-pointed black chalk is almost peculiar to himself. I have several sketches very like his, which are endorsed "by L. P.," but these, I believe, came from his neighbour, John Henderson. I have also a number of pencil sketches from his collection, on paper dated 1801, which are very like Gainsborough's, and are probably some of his earlier work.

Lot No. 888 in the catalogue of books from Cassiobury Park, sold by Messrs. Hodgson & Co. on November 24, 1922, included an album containing "38 original sepia drawings of English Landscape by Dr. Monro." As a matter of fact the drawings are not in sepia, but in blunt-pointed black chalk. They are all more or less of the same size (about 6 × 10 inches), and are chiefly of well-wooded scenes, very similar to the three reproduced in the V. and A. catalogue, in 1917; one is of Stonehenge and another of a ruined castle. The album is conclusive as a



THOMAS MONRO.

LANDSCAPE.

LOUIS THOMAS FRANCIA.

LAMBETH FROM MILLBANK.

To face p. 128.

document, being stamped in gold letters on the cover "These drawings were executed and presented to Lord Essex by his much esteemed friend Dr. Monro, 1814." They prove beyond question that the attribution of many of Monro's drawings to Gainsborough, Hoppner, or La Porte is erroneous.

One of the most interesting of the less famous pupils of Dr. Monro was **Louis Thomas Francia,** who was born at Calais in 1772, and came to London when still very young. He exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy from 1795 to 1822. He was appointed painter in water-colour to the Duchess of York. In 1817 he returned to Calais, where he gave lessons to Bonington. He died in 1839. His subjects were most often coast scenes, though among a dozen examples at South Kensington are several of the inland. He was one of the few artists of the early days of lithography who have left us any specimens of that art. His name to-day is practically unknown except among collectors, and his drawings, which are often met with, are not recognised with certainty unless signed with his monogram, L. T. F. This he was fond of putting on the sails of boats—as may be seen in the example here reproduced—as though it were the owner's.

A Landscape Composition—Moonlight, at South Kensington, is of peculiar interest for the following note written by him on the back of it—a document, by the by, which is decisive for the contention that topography and landscape were fundamentally different aims with water-colourists:—

"This drawing was made on Monday, May the 20th, 1799 (the year of John Robert Cozens's death), at the room of Robert Ker Porter of No. 16 Great Newport Street, Leicester Square, in the very painting room, that formerly was Sir Josuah Reynolds's, and since has been Dr. Samuel Johnson's; and for the first time on the above day convened a small and select society of Young Painters under the title (as I give it) of the Brothers; met for the purpose of establishing by practice a school of Historic Landscape, the subjects being designs from poetick passages:

"L^s^ FRANCIA.

"The Society consists of — Worthington, J. C^s^ Denham, Treas^r^, R^t^ K^r^ Porter, T^s^ Girtin, T^s^ Underwood, G^e^ Samuel and L^s^ Francia, Secretary."

With the notable exception of Girtin, none of these young artists, so far as is known, has left any considerable work in landscape drawing. Sir Robert Ker Porter developed a delicate manner in etching fancy subjects; Underwood is mentioned in connection with James Moore in the Walpole Society's Volume V, quoted in the previous chapter. George Samuel's water-colours are more numerous; they are somewhat similar in character and tone to those of Paul Sandby. In the library at Lambeth Palace are a couple of small albums filled with little coloured drawings of churches in the vicinity of London. Some of them are accompanied by engravings from them, and it must be admitted that the engravings are better than the drawings. Worthington and

THOMAS GIRTIN.

JEDBURGH ABBEY.

(*British Museum.*)

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Denham are names unknown to me except for this mention of them. But who can say how soon a signed or inscribed drawing will "turn up" that will give the key to many of the puzzles set to collectors in the shape of excellent drawings that can be attributed to no certain artist?

Thomas Girtin, born in 1775, like his fellow-student Turner, must have been considerably influenced by the study of John Robert Cozens's work. How much or how little is a matter of dispute; though it is in the ideals of two such strong young spirits rather than in their technique that we should expect to find the influence of an example such as that of Cozens.

Girtin's subjects are, with hardly any exception, topographical; a castle, a bridge, a cathedral, or whatever it might be of that sort, was invariably the central object of interest. But here my distinction clearly fails me, and I feel compelled to leave Hearne as the head of the topographists, and to put Girtin with the landscapists, regardless of the facts, simply because it is obvious in every drawing he made, that his interest in his subject was that of the landscapist and not of the topographist.

Girtin's untimely death, in 1802, left Turner without a rival. It is hardly conceivable that there could have been two Turners, but it is admitted that if judged by their work up to that date, Girtin is by no means inferior. I sometimes think of them as the twin towers of Strasburg Cathedral, the one crowned with a spire, the other left without one.

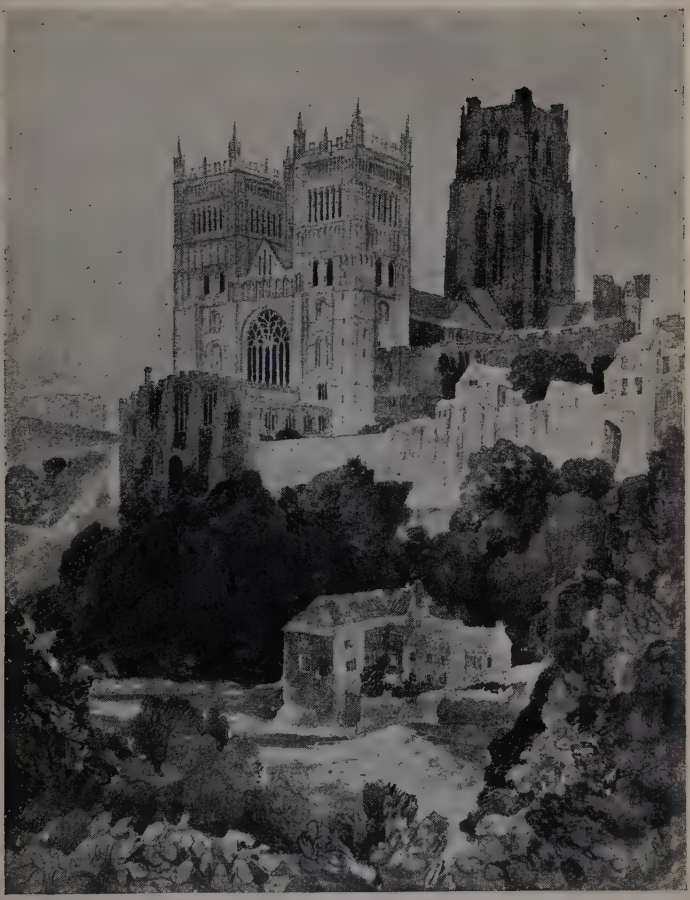
Leaving Turner for the next chapter, as a

landscape painter, we come now to the great trio who, though to a certain extent landscape painters too, yet found their fullest and freest expression in water-colour. These were John Sell Cotman, born in 1782, David Cox in 1783, and Peter de Wint in 1784.

Of all the three, **Cotman** is the one who appeals most to collectors of old English drawings. About all his work there is an air of "earliness" that is absent in that of the other two—especially Cox, who was working till nearly the end of the 'fifties—and as Cotman was a drawing master for the greater part of his life, he seems to have made a great many more sketches and studies in proportion to his finished work. Few of these but are well worth preserving, even his "drawing copies" which he made for his pupils.

At his best, as in the *Greta Bridge* at the British Museum, he is in his own way unrivalled; and even in his most trivial notes of trees, horses, or figures, he is easily recognisable for a "strength and warrantise of skill" such as few other artists display. His touch is so firm and so sure, and his method so simple yet so apt, that whatever he did there is never any doubt about who did it. If there is, it is pretty certain that the drawing is only a pupils' copy—possibly touched here and there by the master.

Cotman's method was so extremely simple and broad that even his masterpieces in water-colour—at least those of his earlier years—are liable to strike the popular eye as "unfinished." That is probably the reason why the *Greta Bridge*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1806, fetched



JOHN SELL COTMAN.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL.

(*British Museum.*)

To face p. 132.

no more than eight shillings when it was sold after Cotman's death in 1842. By that time the public had been fed with many a specious, fussy imitation of oil-painting in water-colour, loaded with detail and brightly coloured. Breadth and simplicity were out of fashion.

In 1802 Cotman joined Francia's sketching club, being then only twenty years old; and a year or two later produced *The Centaur* at one of their evenings. This is in monochrome; but in it we can see exactly how he set to work with *Greta Bridge*, designing the whole in broad masses, and by faultless drawing giving it a quality which we might ask for in vain from what is popularly supposed to be "finish."

For any considerable work by Cotman—or indeed by any of the foremost water-colourists—good money has to be paid nowadays. But the collector may take heart from the old saying, "A penny plain, twopence coloured," and he can still acquire at moderate prices a great deal in pencil or even in monochrome that is often quite as interesting and characteristic as the "exhibition piece." And he will very soon find that a pencil or wash drawing by a great artist is not only a desirable acquisition for the portfolio, but a greater delight and ornament on the walls than many a pretty piece of colouring by an inferior hand. Of his minor drawings there must be still a great number uncollected, though of late years it has become more and more difficult to pick things up cheap. Many of them are quite small, leaves out of sketch-books only a few inches square, but some of them perfect little

pictures in pencil of scenes in the fields, or on the coast with shipping, or studies of horses and farm labourers. Then there are his drawing copies, often of some old building—he was very fond of Norman architecture. In the last few years of his life he did a good many studies of landscape and trees in black chalk on grey paper. To the very beginner I would add a word of caution which is especially needed in the case of a man like Cotman who had so many pupils copying his drawings. For his water-colours there is only one rule—never buy one cheap. For the rest, one can only trust to an eye warned by the knowledge that pupils are sometimes very proficient, and fortified by experience.

John Varley and his brother, **Cornelius Varley,** born in 1778 and 1781 respectively, were both students at Dr. Monro's, and though both of them were to a certain extent topographers, they are certainly to be classed rather as landscapists. Cornelius was less prolific in his output, and his drawings are not very numerous. At South Kensington is the very beautiful *Market Place, Ross,* and I had from Herbert Horne another delightful one, *Monnow Bridge, Monmouth.* They are beautifully drawn, and severely restrained in colour. John Varley's drawings and sketches are so many that the continual attribution of others to him scarcely seems to make any difference. He had such a variety of styles and methods that there is some excuse for attributing anything to him that is of merit, though when he is at his best there is no mistake about it. He is said to have been the originator of

"painting" in water-colour; imitating, that is to say, the methods of oil painting which were, in some respects, diametrically opposed to those of the early water-colourists, and loading his paper with heavy and varied colours. However this may be, his later work is very different from that of his contemporaries De Wint and Cotman, being theatrical and artificial instead of simple and natural.

Peter de Wint was clearly in love with English landscape; not the romantic composition, but the country, especially at harvest time, as he knew it. At Lincoln and at Gloucester there were cathedrals to be sure; but as he shows them to us they are just the embodiment of the spirit in which they were built, centres of the life in the country around them rather than interesting or picturesque relics of antiquity. His masterpiece in oil-painting, the large *Wooded Landscape* in the Sheepshanks Gallery at South Kensington, is, to my mind, one of the finest and most beautiful pictures in the world. Of his water-colours the best are those which he appears to have done on the spot, as observed by the late Alfred Rich in the passage quoted in our first chapter. Replicas of these, touched up for sale or exhibition, are apt to be tiresome and over-elaborated; and on the other hand he had not that spontaneous brilliance of execution that could make his slight sketches or studies as interesting or attractive as those of Cotman or Constable. For this reason, though for no other, it is rather sad to have to say that he is less interesting to the collector, as the only way to obtain an enjoyable

example of his work is to wait for it at Christie's, and pay a somewhat heavy price for it.

It is different with the work of **David Cox**; for although very large prices are paid for his later and more florid water-colour pieces, his earlier and slighter sketches are not only much less regarded by the rich and fashionable, but are, to the lover of the older school, far more interesting. One of his very earliest, as it must be, I was allowed to have at a ridiculously small price by one of the leading dealers (who had it from Cox's granddaughter) simply because he didn't believe it could be by the familiar Cox of later years. It is a perfectly Arcadian picture of old Westminster Bridge with a couple of boys in a boat in the foreground trailing a fishing net. The same benevolent firm gave me for a still smaller figure, a large water-colour sketch of a castle on a hill, with a foreground of trees and a blue sky flecked with white clouds, that some of my visitors take for one of Mr. Wilson Steer's. This is by no means an early work, and it is difficult to suggest any reason for its being unsaleable except, perhaps, the absence of the characteristic signature, which is apparently a *sine qua non* for the rich customer, irrespective of its genuineness.

V

LANDSCAPE PAINTERS' DRAWINGS

CHAPTER V

LANDSCAPE PAINTERS' DRAWINGS

THE first landscape painter of the English school was **Richard Wilson.** He was born at his father's rectory at Pengoes in Montgomeryshire, in the year 1713; but it was not until after he had visited Italy in 1748 that he abandoned the regular road of portrait painting and took to the country. That he was, in fact, the first Briton to do so seems to be a matter of more importance than has been accorded to it in the annals of British art, and it may naturally be asked whether there was not some tradition or precedent, however obscure, to have justified him. The answer is that until the middle of the eighteenth century there was practically no painting at all in England that was not portraiture, and if there was any landscape painting at all, it was merely incidental to portraiture, or the decoration for the panels and ceilings of great houses. Painting in England was less of an art than a profession, or more truly a trade; and when Holbein and Van Dyck came to England, it was simply for purposes of business; the business, that is to say, of painting portraits. The climax was reached by Kneller, who beginning as a pupil (and a very worthy one) of

Rembrandt, ended by simply keeping a portrait shop.

It is said to have been Zuccarelli who determined Wilson to abandon portraits. While waiting one morning in Venice for Zuccarelli, Wilson beguiled the time by painting the view from the window, and Zuccarelli in astonishment asked if he had ever studied landscape. Wilson replied that he had not, and Zuccarelli earnestly advised him to try. Vernet was so struck with the beauty of one of his first attempts that he offered one of his own landscapes in exchange for it, and hung Wilson's in his own exhibition gallery.

Whether or not these ancedotes are literally true, it is certain that Wilson's landscape art was developed in Italy, and we find accordingly that most of his drawings are of Italian scenes, as indeed are also most of his pictures.

None of his drawings in the Dyce Collection are English, and only one or two of those in the British Museum. Out of over thirty in the Esdaile sale, only one was English—"View of London from the Thames—a capital drawing heightened with white."

In another respect, however, they are essentially English—if the Welsh will forgive me for calling him an Englishman—namely, in the originality of their treatment. Not only is the technique unmistakably English in character—the slightest or the most elaborate of his Italian drawings are at once recognisable as by an English hand; but, as Edwards puts it, "he did not waste his time, nor subjugate his powers to the unimproving

drudgery of copying the pictures of the old masters, but contented himself with making his observations upon their works and afterwards confirming those observations by his studies from Nature. In consequence of this prudent method of cultivating his talents, he wisely avoided any imitation of the pictures of the Italian masters who preceded him, and at once struck out a manner, both of execution and design, which was classical, grand, and original. . . . He has represented *the general character* of Italy with more decided precision than can be found in the works of his predecessors. In his pictures the waving line of mountains which bound the distance in every point of view, the dreary inhospitable plains, rendered solemnly interesting by the mouldering fragments of temples, tombs, and aqueducts, are all indicated in a masterly manner, exhibiting that local character which, though familiar to the inhabitants, cannot but be considered as peculiarly grand and classical."

A good deal of this passage is perhaps aimed by Edwards at the teaching of Reynolds, with whom Wilson was never on the best of terms, and who had passed such unmerited censure on Wilson's *Niobe* in his last Discourse. But I have quoted it at length as forming an estimate of Wilson's paintings which, as it happens, is singularly applicable to his drawings.

The breadth and simplicity of these sketches, done on grey paper in pencil or chalk heightened with white, distinguishes them sharply from the compositions in pen and bistre of Claude and his followers. From Zuccarelli, Wilson seems to

have taken little ; from Claude absolutely nothing. The difference between the drawings of Claude and those of Wilson is the difference between the sun and the moon ; the former full of light and heat, the latter pale, silvery, and tranquil.

The name of **Gainsborough** is so closely associated with portraiture in the popular mind that its inclusion among those of the landscape painters seems almost to require some justification. Yet two of Gainsborough's most beautiful pictures in the national collection are *The Watering Place* and *The Market Cart.* Perhaps when all the portraits have gone to America we may see a fancy price paid for a Gainsborough landscape such as the one in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Meantime we may refer to a passage in the majestic Discourse delivered by Sir Joshua Reynolds shortly after Gainsborough's death : " Whether he most excelled in portraits, in landscapes, or fancy-pictures, it is difficult to determine."

Although Gainsborough painted many more portraits than landscapes, there are scores of his landscape drawings in existence for every one of his portrait studies. From boyhood one of his greatest delights was to go into the woods and sketch, and in later life he went so far as to bring the mountain to Mahomet. " From the fields," says Reynolds, " he brought into his painting room stumps of trees, weeds, and animals of various kinds, and designed them not from memory but immediately from the objects. He even framed a kind of model of landscapes on his table ; composed of broken stones, dried

herbs, and pieces of looking-glass, which he magnified and improved into rocks, trees, and water." A passage that Wordsworth may have had in his mind when writing of the mortal remains of *Lucy Gray*—

> Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
> With rocks and stones and trees.

The 148 drawings exhibited at his house in Pall Mall after his death could have been only a tithe of the total number he did. At the British Museum there are plenty, and at South Kensington; and they are constantly to be seen in the sale-room, and the dealers' shops. If not very cheap, they are not as yet accorded fabulous prices, and every collector ought to have one if only as a sort of talisman to attract the right sort of acquisition. There is much virtue in a Gainsborough drawing—it keeps evil spirits out of the collection.

The majority of them are done with a lead pencil on white paper or with charcoal or black chalk upon grey or drab paper, sometimes heightened with white or slightly coloured. Of his vagaries in technique, as well as in composition, there are other writers than Reynolds, but they must not be taken too literally. This is what Edwards says of his drawings as a whole :—

" Mr. Gainsborough left a great number of drawings, which he had made during his leisure moments. These productions, like his pictures, may be divided in two distinct classes, both as to the choice of subjects and the manner of their execution. In the first class are those which he

made in his youth, at which time he was attentive to rural scenery; and several of these early drawings possess a peculiar freedom of execution, accompanied by a judicious attention to the minutiæ of nature, that is not surpassed by any production of the Flemish masters in the same line of art; these were mostly in black lead, and some in black Italian chalk.

"The second class consisted of those which he executed after he settled at Bath, where he adopted a very different manner, both of style and execution, the subjects being more romantic in their composition, and their execution more indeterminate and (if the expression may be allowed) more licentious than those of the former class. These last were executed by a process rather capricious, truly deserving the epithet bestowed upon them by a witty lady, who called them moppings.

"Many of these were in black and white, which colours were applied in the following manner; a small bit of sponge tied to a bit of stick served as a pencil for the shadows, and a small lump of whiting, held by a pair of tea-tongs, was the instrument by which the high lights were applied; besides these there were others in black and white chalk, India ink, bistre, and some in a slight tint of oil colours; with these various materials he struck out a vast number of bold, free sketches of landscape and cattle, all of which have a most captivating effect to the eye of an artist or connoisseur of real taste."

The effect of two out of the twenty-seven drawings in the Dyce Collection, which are

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.

A FARM CART.

(*British Museum.*)

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.

LANDSCAPE.

(*British Museum.*)

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coloured and apparently glazed with gum, may possibly be attributed to some sort of treatment such as that described by Edwards; but it is obvious that in general Gainsborough drawings owe nothing to tea-tongs or whiting for their sweetness and brilliance. That his technique was peculiarly his own is the worst that the great Sir Joshua could say about it, and as even he almost confesses himself baffled by it, it is small wonder that the public eagerly took up any explanation of it that brought it within the simple compass of their domestic paraphernalia.

The closing sentence in the passages above quoted from Edwards bring us to a consideration of the drawings themselves: "all of which have a most captivating effect to the eye of an artist or connoisseur of real taste." And here, too, we may bring in Reynolds again: "If Gainsborough did not look at Nature with a poet's eye, it must be acknowledged that he saw her with the eye of a painter; and gave a faithful, if not poetical, representation of what he had before him."

With Reynolds's idea of what was poetical we need not stop to trouble ourselves; but as a painter he was on his own ground, and we have only to compare the drawings of Gainsborough with those of the earlier water-colourists to see that Edwards and Reynolds were both exactly right, and that Gainsborough's drawings were essentially a painter's drawings. They are composed rather than drawn. To put it very practically and prosaically, a photograph of a view by Hearne or Sandby, would suggest to an untrained

intelligence the actual place; a photograph of one of Gainsborough's landscape drawings would rather appear to be taken from an oil painting.

As for their quality, it is hardly too much to say that their general characteristic is enchantment. To those who think of a landscape as merely a view, and a drawing as simply a faithful rendering of natural objects, they can hardly be expected to appeal. So far as I am aware there is not one of his numerous sketches that has been identified as representing any particular place; and though it would hardly be true to assert that the scenes existed only in his artistic fancy, their quality is certainly such as to suggest it. Oh! for another such fancy.

John Crome, generally known as Old Crome, was apparently a much less prolific draughtsman. Of his drawings there are singularly few authenticated examples known, and consequently collectors should be cautious in accepting attributions to this master from any but those best informed. There is one small pencil sketch at the British Museum inscribed, "View from the King's Head Gardens at Thorpe, July 3, 1806, J. Crome," which is the subject of an oil painting reproduced in the *Portfolio* in 1897. There is also a large water-colour, *The Hollow Road,* and one or two slight pencil and other sketches. At South Kensington there are two or three water-colours, similar in technique to the above. From his etchings also we are able to judge what sort of drawings may reasonably be attributed to him—especially the "soft ground" etchings, which being drawn with a pencil on paper are closer to

an original drawing than if etched with a needle.

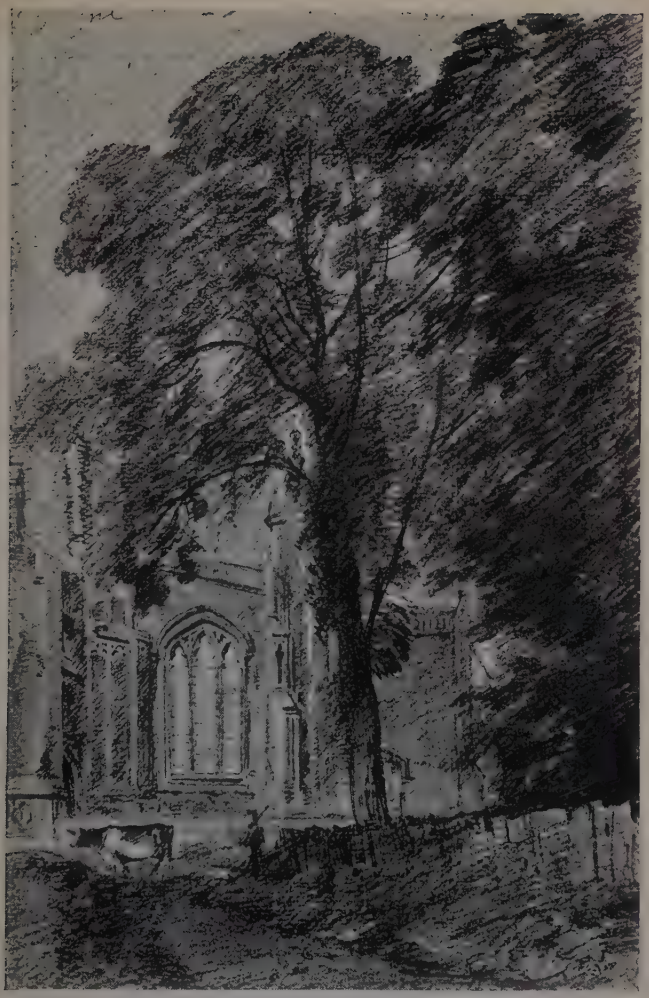
John Constable, born in 1776 at East Bergholt on the borders of Essex and Suffolk, was almost alone among landscape painters in one respect which touches our subject, namely that he took his oil paints and canvas into the open and made a great number of his studies and sketches in oils, as may be seen on a visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the collector of drawings is so much the worse off. At the same time, there is also this to be said, that the possibility of purchasing such oil sketches has diverted attention from his pencil or wash drawings, and so they may be had more cheaply. Such, at least, was my experience when I began to collect a quarter of a century ago.

Although several of Constable's most famous pictures are known by titles that would suggest a human interest, such as *The Hay Wain, The Valley Farm, Salisbury Cathedral, The Leaping Horse,* etc., he was, in fact, more than any of his compatriots interested in landscape for itself alone. The landscape, that is to say, influenced solely by the atmosphere, not by man. Architecture he seldom touched, and agriculture he disregarded. *The Cornfield,* another of his best known pictures was not so named by him, and as he said was really a glimpse of a country lane. Salisbury Cathedral happened to be between the trees and under the rainbow which really constitute the motive of the picture so named. Constable's coloured sketches might, accordingly, in the barbarous modern journalese be called "close-

ups"; they are nearer to the reality in their vivacity, sparkle and movement than any more beautiful or ideal rendering of a scene. In pencil, chalk or monochrome, we cannot look for the same effect; but here the delight is in recognising his masterly touch in forecasting what is to come.

Of his pencil drawings it is interesting to read what the late Alfred Rich, the water-colourist, had to say:—"He was a master draughtsman, as well as being most subtle in his selection of subjects. I think his little pencil drawing [at South Kensington] of a horse and cart in sunshine is a strong evidence of his power of composition. . . . In the use of the pencil few have shown such complete mastery. If ever a man painted in pencil it was Constable, and truly choice paintings they were." And yet, not more than a dozen years ago, one of the foremost dealers in London sold me six or seven large and about twice as many small pencil drawings of the master at an average of about a couple of shillings apiece and seemed glad to get rid of them. They were the residue of a parcel from which all the water-colour sketches had "gone off," except one which was rather peculiar in treatment, and that I also had very cheap. To-day no doubt these would sell very well, but just because they were "only pencil," the public didn't want them.

Among the larger ones was a view in Borrowdale, dated October 1806, washed with indian ink; and it was rather a shock to me, I remember, when some years afterwards I came upon a



JOHN CONSTABLE.

EAST BERGHOLT CHURCHYARD.

(*Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

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photograph in a railway holiday excursion book which must have been taken from the very spot where Constable sat to make his drawing. I have never been there, but I recognised it instantly, although the bridge in the foreground had been put into better repair than it was in 1806.

For the study of Constable's early drawings in black chalk, Sir John Holmes, in addition to his large volume, has provided an invaluable apparatus in the shape of a thin quarto, published in 1921, in which fourteen examples are reproduced and separately commented on. Most of these show a decided likeness in treatment to the early landscape drawings of Gainsborough, and Sir John points out that the reason for this is very probably that a number of Gainsborough's early drawings, made when he was in Suffolk, may have been preserved in the neighbourhood and seen by Constable when he was himself a beginner; Dedham being not many miles from the Suffolk border. I have a small pencil drawing of Constable's that even Herbert Horne at one time thought was Gainsborough's. This influence is less apparent when he developed his own power more fully, but it was certainly a very strong one.

To most people, I suppose, **Turner** is best known in his latest manner—all glory and fireworks! But that is only his latest manner. Collectors of his water-colours know him better than that, and are even familiar with his early pale blue monochrome drawings, when they are

finished pieces. But of the sketches and studies of his earlier years, which are those which chiefly concern us as "old English drawings," the one distinguishing quality is exactly the reverse of what might be expected from the painter of glory and fireworks, namely intense accuracy, a vivid presentment of the actual object or scene he was delineating. That is the one certain quality that underlies every variety of his drawings, however different his materials or his moods may have rendered them in outward appearance; his touch is as certain, his skill as supreme in pencilling a church tower, in softly chalking out a mountain horizon, or in working in a middle distance with water-colour.

In looking for Turner drawings, therefore, one must first of all try to forget that he was the painter of *The Sun of Venice* and *The Fighting Temeraire*. The smallest of genuine water-colour sketches of that late period would cost you three figures, and specious imitations of them are abundant and worse than worthless.

Next, one must try to remember that it was only by his ceaseless industry and care that he acquired the command over his materials which rendered him capable of expressing himself in so wonderful a way; and that of even the earliest products of innate genius yoked with such serious purpose nothing is trivial, nothing of less beauty and interest than any finished work of an inferior artist. That Ruskin may have extolled Turner beyond fairness to his contemporaries and that Ruskin is at the present moment out of fashion, does not affect Turner's true position as

one of the greatest masters of any school of painting.

Ruskin roughly divides Turner's periods into six, counting his first twenty-five years, to 1800, as the time of his schooling, and each successive decade as another. Of these at most the first two, say to 1810, concern the collector of "old drawings"; for by that time he was indeed becoming a "modern painter," and had flown beyond our horizon. All that we want to know about here is his earliest work, produced under the training of the old English school, and according to their traditions. "He was born on St. George's Day in 1775," Ruskin writes in the catalogue of the memorable exhibition of his Turner drawings at the Fine Art Society in 1878. "He produced no work till he was past twenty; working constantly, from the day he could hold a pencil, in steady studentship, with gradually increasing intelligence, and, fortunately for him, rightly guided skill. His true master was Dr. Monro; to the practical teaching of that first patron, and the wise simplicity of the method of water-colour study in which he was disciplined by him, and companioned by Girtin, the healthy and constant development of the youth's power is primarily to be attributed. The greatness of the power it is impossible to over-estimate. . . .

"In the summer of 1797, when he was two-and-twenty, he took, if not actually his first journey, certainly the first with fully prepared and cultivated faculties, into Yorkshire and Cumberland. In the following year he exhibited ten pictures in the Royal Academy."

As to his very earliest extant drawings there must always be some doubt, and one would naturally hesitate to accept an attribution to him for drawings of this date without very good evidence either of their *provenance* or from the drawings themselves. There are, however, a great many slight drawings to be found here and there which came from Dr. Monro's and also from his neighbour John Henderson's collection of uncertain authorship, but of obvious merit—considering what they are. That many of these are from Dr. Monro's pupils, and not from his own hand, is pretty certain ; and the chances are that amongst them are a proportion, however small, of Turner's. His copies of Cozens's drawings done at this period are well known. He is also said to have copied William Payne's. And it is at least probable that more of his copies and original sketches may yet be identified. On the other hand, I have two little water-colours from John Henderson's collection which, although so able and so charming that I am continually being laughed at for saying they are by Henderson—a name quite unknown except to collectors—cannot in the present state of our knowledge be given to anyone but Henderson. Sir John Holmes, I remember, once playfully offered with just one touch to make one of them a Turner. A pencil sketch of Ramsgate has come even nearer to being acclaimed a Turner. But for the present my advice is, Beware of Henderson—except *as* Henderson, when he is quite worth attention.

Of a real example of this period—the

end of it—this is what Ruskin writes in his catalogue: "*Boat Building*.—By patient labour, the youth at last attains such power as we see here. Utmost delicacy, with utmost decision. Take a lens to it, you will find the teeth of the saw in the carpenter's hand, and the blocks of the shrouds in the distant vessels. Yet the gradation of the interior of the boat is given with one dash of colour, carefully managed while wet, and the harmony of the whole is perfect. The sky is singularly tender and lovely. Nothing more to be learned now in the ways of doing: it is time for us to see what we have to do."

The Rev. W. Kingsley added the following note on this drawing: "I copied this drawing carefully nineteen times, and by that labour learned it well. Examine the rings round the inside of the boat and the cleats for the oars, each is a separate study. The tools in the carpenter's hands and on the bench are portraits. See also the footprints the men have left on their way from the boat. In the vessel on the right the block on the yard has the halyard through it. The colours used are only prussian blue, light red, raw umber, and black. Turner took care to learn how much could be got out of such simple colours before he ventured on using more; and in his most brilliant effects there is no difficulty in matching the colours used."

To this I should like to add a very few words; go and look at a little early water-colour in the Victoria and Albert Museum by an extremely popular Victorian water-colourist, Samuel Prout, and examine the rowing boat lying against the

harbour wall in the middle distance. Then look at any of his later and more important pieces, several of which are near at hand, and see how clumsy they are. The boy is father of the man.

VI

THE COUNTRYSIDE

CHAPTER VI

THE COUNTRYSIDE

We have still left over a variety of interesting draughtsmen whose works are of the "landscape" order, but whose species precludes their admission into any of the three preceding chapters. Through the meshes of our three-fold net have escaped, we shall find, more than one very sizable fish and a good many small fry; and these I propose to group under the above heading, as the common quality of their subjects, to a greater or less degree, is the country in relation to the everyday life of its occupants, whether man or beast. In this sense the present chapter makes a link between those preceding and following; though I must ask for some freedom in traversing this neutral, indeterminate territory, so as to bring in some of those artists whose varied subjects it is difficult to classify with any precision.

Let us begin with the most important, **George Morland,** a painter of the first rank when at his best. As it happens, he is also one of the most various in his subjects, excelling alike in landscape, life and manners, marine or seashore subjects, and animals; all of which fall within

the vague limits of what I mean to convey by the term "Countryside."

It was a common practice of the earlier landscape painters, both English and foreign, to enliven their pictures by the introduction of "figures"—a term said to have been first used by Reynolds in conversation with Wilson on Richmond Hill. It was a mere device, the figures in many known cases being painted in by another hand; and it was similar to the practice of relieving a portrait by a landscape background—a sort of tit for tat. But Morland's pictures are so constituted that it is their combinations of landscape and figures that makes the subject, in the same way, if I may use the analogy, as water is constituted of hydrogen and oxygen. The landscape is usually a simple and not very extensive scene that he may have selected in almost any of the lanes or villages round about London, and the figures are not artificially composed, but as we see them in everyday life. But the landscape is not just a background for the figures, nor are the figures just an embellishment of the landscape. Both have an equal share in the composition of the subject. It thus happens that, incidentally rather than avowedly, he touches on the ground covered by our chapter on life and manners, though his fondness for the peasants, sailors, and others of not a very high state of life restrict him to only a corner of it.

Morland's defiant contempt of polite society is foreshadowed in an anecdote related with horror by Edward Dayes in his *Professional Sketches*

GEORGE MORLAND.

SHEPHERD BOYS.

(*British Museum.*)

To face p. 158.

of Modern Artists, published shortly after their author's death, in 1804. "Even when a boy, he was obstinate and wayward," he writes. "Benjamin West (President of the Royal Academy in 1792), having called at his father's one evening, found young Morland, who was then about five years old, standing naked before the fire. Having spoken to the youngster two or three times, he returned no answer, but looked sulky, on which West asked him if he had no tongue; without making any reply he immediately looked up and thrust it out of the corner of his mouth!"

Drawings by George Morland are not very plentiful, as he was above all things a painter, and he very seldom took the trouble even to sketch out his pictures on the canvas. He would take his easel with him into the fields or into the stable and just paint. The best class of his drawings, such as the example given here from the British Museum, are in black chalk on large sheets of paper. They are not as attractive as might be expected from so charming a painter, nor are they particularly interesting as revelations of his mood or his manner. But they are good, sound work, and easily distinguishable from the multitude of spurious imitations and copies palmed off as his.

In the Esdaile Catalogue were :—

A peasant family in a landscape with a village in the distance.

A farmyard with horses, donkeys, and pigs. A capital drawing in black chalk.

A group of peasants under a tree in a storm. A capital drawing.

I do not know the present whereabouts of any of these, nor have I come across more than one or two genuine specimens in the portfolios in all the years I have been collecting. Two of these, neither of them very important, are a bold pencil study of *A Boy Setting on Dogs to Fight*, and a small woody landscape with a cottage. I fancy that all the best are in the houses of sportsmen rather than in the portfolios of collectors.

James Ward, who was Morland's brother-in-law, was somewhat similar in his range and his attainments. Both their paintings and drawings are occasionally given to the wrong one. But Ward was never a popular painter as Morland was, and his fine, wild landscapes are very different from Morland's more homely scenes. Ward's drawings are both numerous and varied and always worth having, especially at the low prices asked for them as compared with Morland's. A list of some that I have picked up in the last few years will give an idea of their variety.

In pencil. Several small studies of harvest wagons, and one of a woman sitting beside a cradle. These are all signed "J. W., R.A.," and are inscribed with shorthand notes—which I have not succeeded in deciphering. Also a composition in miniature, *The Obstinate Ass*, inscribed "First thoughts for Sir C. Grenville's picture." (I hope I have made it clear that this is a subject picture, not a caricature.)

In oils, on paper. A replica of a picture of a white pony in a landscape.

In soft white chalk. A heifer browsing.

In pencil and wash. *The Frightened Girl.*

Philip James de Loutherbourg, R.A., born at Fulda in 1740, came to England in 1771, and died here in 1812. He painted landscapes, battle pieces, coast scenes, and scenery for Garrick at Drury Lane.

In 1782, he exhibited an invention which he called the "Eidophusicon, or a Representation of Nature," one of the drawings for which, dated 1799, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Another landscape drawing is there which was engraved in his *Picturesque Scenery of Great Britain* published in 1806.

In the British Museum is a series of his drawings in pen and bluish-grey wash of scenes in the Isle of Wight. Some of these are on small cards, and others of the same kind are reproduced in the last volume of the Walpole Society, where they are noticed in connection with the early drawings of Turner and the other artists associated with him at that time. But his activities were so varied that he is a promising candidate for a good many of the better sort of anonymous drawings and sketches of landscapes and figures of his period.

Julius Cæsar Ibbetson, born at Scarborough in 1759, came to London in 1777. In 1788 he went to China with Cathcart's Embassy. He died at Masham in his native county in 1812. He painted a good many small landscapes, the charm of which was usually enhanced by groups of figures and cattle. His water-colours of the same sort of subject are not always so successful, but occasionally, as for example, *The Sale of the Pet Lamb,* in the Dyce Collection at South

Kensington, they are excellent. A large sketch of a farmyard, in pen outline washed with indian ink, with numerous figures and farm animals of all sorts, was lately given to me by the kindest of friends, knowing how much I admired it. I have never seen any other unfinished drawing of his, but his style is sufficiently distinctive to be fairly easily recognised, and there ought to be some more.

Of the personality of **P. le Cave,** who was working about 1800, nothing is known, and I cannot help feeling that there is something mysterious about it. His water-colours are very numerous and very easily recognised; some are signed P. le Cave and dated, others La Cave: others unsigned, but obviously by him—whoever he may have been. At South Kensington is one which is clearly by his hand, but it is signed, "J. R. Morris" and dated 1806. It is catalogued as *Cottage with Cart and Figures.* All of his drawings are of carts, cattle, and figures in a landscape setting, very agreeably coloured. They are not unlike Ibbetson's in subject and in style, but are generally smaller, both in size and in design. Mr. Thomas Girtin has a large one, which is obviously composed out of various smaller ones, and is therefore a failure; but his smaller ones are very charming. It is certainly very odd that so prolific and so delightful a draughtsman should have left no personal records of any sort, and it may be asked whether his signature does not conceal his real name.

In the works of all the foregoing, cattle, horses, and dogs are important and very agreeable

JOHN THOMAS SMITH.

A PUPIL.

(Collection of A. P. Oppé, Esq.)

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features, as well as their human masters. Combined with the landscape, and not merely put in for effect, these living creatures in their natural surroundings afford many subjects that are a pleasant variation from pure landscape or topography. Gainsborough has contributed not a few. Two of his most popular pictures are *The Watering Place* and *The Market Cart*; and many of his slighter sketches are of similar subjects. I have a delightful one of a farm boy following a horse on which two calves are seated! And another of a farmyard at milking time, on the back of which is a still rougher sketch for the picture of the harvest wagon. Sawrey Gilpin's drawings are chiefly of horses, but I have one that is comparable with Gainsborough's mentioned above, of a girl seated sideways on a farm horse carrying a lamb, the dam looking up at her from one side, with some other sheep and a dog on the other. I have also a little drawing signed "George Garrard"—who engraved sporting subjects—of two mares and their foals. I do not remember having seen any drawings of George Stubbs, the great painter of horses. John Wootton, to go back to the beginning of the eighteenth century, has left numerous drawings of horses and hounds, but they are of very unequal quality. One of them, in pen outline, at the British Museum is singularly fine, but the rest are by no means of the same order. Francis Barlow, still earlier, was an admirable draughtsman, but I am keeping him for another chapter, as his best known work was done for book illustrations.

Sporting subjects, as a general rule, may be considered as outside the purview of the collector of drawings, as such. They are rather for the jovial sportsman, who can afford to pay a good price for a smart piece of work in which artistic considerations are of no particular moment. All that I have filched from this basket has been a small drawing of a meet of hounds in front of a mansion, of so early a date that the huntsman carries a circular horn—perhaps by Wootton—and a large finished pencil sketch by Luke Clennell for his picture, *The Sportsman's Repast.*

Thomas Rowlandson we have already made friends with in a previous chapter; but that was the Town Rowlandson. In the country he was still the same, but the farther he got from the town the more charming and inoffensive his drawings became, and from his pen alone might be compiled a volume of subjects which would perhaps give a better, a more comprehensive, and a more agreeable view of the old English countryside than could be collected from the drawings of all the rest of his contemporaries put together. The landscapists have shown us the beauties of Nature; the topographists the various "objects of interest" with or without a landscape setting. But of the everyday incidents of life in the country in the latter half of the eighteenth century—which had changed but little from that of several centuries earlier—no one has left a fuller or more vivid record than Rowlandson. Nowadays, the railway and the motor van, the Board of Education and the daily Press, have so completely changed it, that the younger generation

are hardly aware that in their grandparents' time countrymen wore smock frocks and worsted stockings, that ploughs and wagons were drawn by oxen, and that there were no advertisements or machinery in the country and its wayside or village inns.

As a general rule, it may be said that when in the country Rowlandson dropped the caricaturist; but his peculiar gift for seeing the humorous side of things was never dormant for long. One little drawing, which I sent to a friend in New York, was of an itinerant vendor of little figures, displaying his wares to a group of villagers at the door of the inn. The artless expression of the old country parson, who had selected a Venus for inspection, was not caricature —it was just quietly but perfectly humorous. So with the stolid gaze of a group of cattle, in another I have, at a couple of young women who have invaded their watering-place and are sitting on the bank—ignorant of the approach of the cows—preparing to paddle. For London customers an infinite variety of subjects of this sort were magnified into gross and sometimes unseemly caricature.

The operations of farming hardly came within his scope, as he was a townsman, and when in the country only a tourist, so that his subjects are chiefly confined to the road and the village inn or street. Occasionally he gives us a landscape, generally as the background for a house or group of houses; but the road is really his base all along. In his landscape he seems to be fondest of a background of hills, which, like

everything he touched, are fat and round. A mountain peak, one cannot help feeling, he would have converted into a dome.

I am not aware that any systematic attempt has been made to follow out the course of Rowlandson's country tours, which must have been both frequent and extensive. I have seen drawings by him of a village in Suffolk—I forget the name—Grimsby, Knaresborough, and Dunstable. A year or two ago a couple of albums were sold filled with a beautiful series of drawings made on a tour in the south-west. In 1811 he was in Cornwall, where he made some of his finest landscape drawings, some of which were etched. I have one of Hametothey Mill, which was probably done on his tour. In 1797 he set off with his friend Henry Wigstead, who published in 1800, *Remarks on a Tour to North and South Wales*, with numerous illustrations by Rowlandson. This was the age, as we have seen, for topographical works with copious plates; but Rowlandson was no topographist. His illustrations are of "the countryside." For example, there is the kitchen of the inn at Newcastle (North Wales), with the turnspit at work, which furnishes an apt proof that drawings of this sort were of actual scenes and occurrences; for Wigstead tells us all about this dog and how he ran away and hid whenever he saw visitors approaching, in the vain attempt to evade his onerous duties.

The impression one gets from these countryside drawings is that Rowlandson thoroughly enjoyed getting away from London, where he must have been at the beck and call of people

THOMAS ROWLANDSON.

A FRUIT STALL.

THOMAS ROWLANDSON.

THE BASKET MAKERS.

To face p. 166.

who were always asking him for something more and more comic and extravagant. But he was not a landscapist, and he was not a topographer. The country, of itself, seems to have had little interest for him. But whenever he came upon a group of people, whether on the road, at the door of an inn or inside it, down they went and the scenery with them. Sometimes it was a huntsman with the hounds, sometimes only a herd of deer under a tree. But it must be something alive, and whatever it was it lost none of its life in the delineation.

The only drawing of his which I can call to mind that has no figures in it is one of the gateway of Dover Castle. This is in monochrome, and of rather a small size; but it is as fine a drawing as any of his more important works; which shows that he had his serious moments, however rare they may have been. One would naturally have expected a castle by Rowlandson to have been a sort of pantomime travesty, with bulging round towers and grinning portcullises with an ogre leaning over the battlements.

VII

DRAWINGS OF CLASSICAL AND ROMANTIC SUBJECTS

CHAPTER VII

DRAWINGS OF CLASSICAL AND ROMANTIC SUBJECTS

HAVING now dealt with two of the three major divisions of subjects—Portraits and Landscape—we come to the third—History—in which are to be found a great deal of the most attractive work of foreign draughtsmen who settled in England, as well as of some of the best of our own countrymen.

By History, as already explained, is not to be understood merely the illustration of Gibbon, Motley, or Mrs. Markham. The term is used in a wider sense, for example, by William Blake in writing to his friend Thomas Butts with reference to his portrait. "Historical designing is one thing," he writes, "and portrait painting another; and they are as distinct as any two arts can be. Happy would that man be who could unite them." And again: "Portrait painting is the direct contrary to designing and historical painting, in every respect. If you have not Nature before you for every touch, you cannot paint a portrait, and if you have Nature before you at all, you cannot paint

history. It was Michelangelo's opinion, and it is mine." [1]

This second passage incidentally explains the poverty of the English school in this department of painting; for not only had it been grounded in portraiture, but also it is undeniable that the English temperament, at any rate in the eighteenth century, was solid and insular rather than inclined towards the classical or romantic.

But as it would be unfair to the casual reader to stigmatise the subject of the present chapter as "historical," in the modern sense of the word—when Mr. G. M. Trevelyan has to remind us that Clio was a Muse—and, as "fancy subjects," though there is good authority for the expression, savours too much nowadays of the auctioneer's catalogue to befit the works of Blake and Flaxman, to mention no others, I have ventured upon "classical and romantic" as conveying most nearly the idea of what would formerly have been designated "historical." And however poor in this respect the English school of painting may appear in comparison with those of other countries, we shall find that, although there is a considerable leaven of foreign influence to be taken account of in the present chapter, yet the greatest figures in it are those of English draughtsmen.

If it were not for **Sir James Thornhill,** who opened the eighteenth-century chapter of English art with a bold and quite successful challenge to the monopoly of foreigners like Verrio,

[1] From the Letters of William Blake, edited by Mr. A. G. B. Russell.

Laguerre, and Sebastian Ricci in decorating public and private buildings, none of the drawings under this heading would be older than about 1760. For with the exception of his accomplished son-in-law Hogarth, and of a feeble imitator in William Kent, Thornhill had little, if any, influence on his immediate successors. For half a century after his death there was practically no art but portrait painting, and so we need not expect to find any drawings of this period.

Of Thornhill's drawings there are a great many still in existence, and though it is somewhat surprising that so many should have survived, inasmuch as they are seldom of any particular importance, many of them are well worth the collector's attention. For the most part they are designs for the decoration of ceilings, walls, or staircases, but there are some which are of more intrinsic worth. The example here reproduced, Venus and Adonis, is a good instance of what he was capable of as a draughtsman, and is well worthy to bear the mark of so illustrious a virtuoso as William Esdaile. Another, in the British Museum, is out of the collections of Hudson and Sir Joshua Reynolds.

It is easy enough to say that a drawing of this sort is inferior, as much in interest as in merit, to the work of the great foreign masters; but for our present purpose it is more to the point to compare it with the later work of our own countrymen.

For wherever Thornhill drew his inspiration from there is something so robust and capable about his work that it cannot fail to attract,

even if it does not charm. Thornhill was a man who was thoroughly in earnest with life. He was a scion of an old Dorsetshire family—he was born at Weymouth in 1675—and besides being knighted in recognition of his work in St. Paul's Cathedral, succeeded in being returned to Parliament and in re-seating himself in his ancestral home. He deserves more of his country in these days than the reflected glory of being Hogarth's father-in-law, and the study of his drawings will amply repay the trouble of affording him this recognition.

The British Museum has sixty-eight of his drawings separately catalogued, besides an album of 147 pages which is filled with his sketches, notes and studies, consisting of copies of pictures in Italy, landscape studies in Derbyshire, copies of Dutch pictures, and studies for portraits and decorations. This book is inscribed, " J. Thornhill, An. Dom. 1699 Ap. 20," and is thus a valuable record of his early training—he was then but twenty-four years old.

Among the other drawings are studies for the grisaille pictures in the Painted Hall at Greenwich of the landing of the Prince of Orange at Torbay, and the landing of George I. at Greenwich. One of the latter is especially interesting, as being inscribed with very minute and curious notes giving an insight into his methods of compiling an historical picture. In those days the artist had not much precedent to work upon, and these notes show us what was passing in his mind, the difficulties that faced him, and the way he overcame them. Thus :—

SIR JAMES THORNHILL.

VENUS AND ADONIS.

To face p. 174.

Objections which will arise from the plain representation of the king landing September 18, 1714, as it was in fact and in the modern way and dress.

1. First of all it was night, which to represent would be hard and ungraceful in a picture. No ships appearing and boats make a small figure.

(Answered.) Take the liberty of an evening sky and torches. Take the liberty to bring in the yatch [*sic*] that brought over the king, and the barge and guns firing, etc.

2. Then who shall be there to accompany them? If the real nobles that were there, then some of them are in disgrace now and so will be so much party in picture.

(Answered.) Make only five or six of the chief nobles—the rest in the crowd.

3. To have their faces and dresses as they really were, difficult.

(Answered.) Imagine their dresses the best you can and get their faces from the life.

4. The king's own dress then not graceful nor enough worthy of him to be transmitted to posterity.

(Answered.) Make the king's dress as it now is and as it should have been rather than what it was.

5. There was a vast crowd, which to represent would be ugly, and not to represent would be false.

(Answered.) Take the liberty to lessen the crowd as they ought to have been then.

But difficulties of this sort were not so likely to arise in classical subjects; or if they did they

were less scrupulously dealt with. With a general idea of the Italians' treatment of their country's legends, and a feeling for the possibilities of drapery, more or less as occasion demanded it, one could do a great deal with the heathen deities that was beyond the reach of criticism from the matter-of-fact English. Country squires, who had been birched into some sort of acquaintance with the doings of Diana or Jupiter in their Eton days, may have been tickled at seeing representations of them on their ceilings and staircases, but could hardly be expected to pass a very critical judgment upon them. Being the only person of his time with a spark of imagination, Thornhill did well to let his fancy loose, and though many, if not most, of his finished productions have faded or perished entirely, the series of his drawings in the British Museum is alone enough to show how busily he was employed. No. 32 in the catalogue—a design for an octagon—is inscribed thus :—

Histories proper to a Dining Room or to the Pavilion of a seat in a Hunting Country : Bacchus, Venus and Ceres ; Zephyrus and Flora ; Peace and Plenty ; 4 seasons of the year ; Bacchus and Ariadne ; Bacchus and Ceres ; Diana and Endymion ; Jupiter and Callisto. 24 ft. high.

Neither Adonis nor Actæon, it may be observed, is included as proper to a hunting country.

No. 35 is in commemoration of a successful general :—

Hercules or Heroick Virtue holding the Arms. The Hydra slain, on which he tramples, denoting the difficulties that he has overcome. Envy at a distance wearing her snaky hair, etc. Little Genii holding the General's Staff.

No. 28(*a*) is a design for a ceiling, of Diana and Endymion; the inscription supplies the colour scheme :—

Bedchamber at Hanbury. The Battens marble colour. The Boy's drapery green. Diana in a fine blew. Endymion in a light red. Morpheus in yellow. The mouldings round the ceiling yellow gold. The Trophies green gold.

No. 29 is for a staircase, Apollo and Daphne. No. 30 Apollo, Pan and Midas. No. 19 the Sacrifice of Iphigenia by Agamemnon, with the apparition of Artemis. No. 36 Achilles dipped in Styx. In the album are sketches for the Apotheosis of William and Mary, the Apotheosis of Queen Anne, and an illustration to Guarini's Pastor Fido—suitable for the recipients of Birthday Honours—"Amarillis presents Mertillo with a Coronet."

Several of the drawings for his decoration of the cupola of St. Paul's Cathedral are in Sir Robert Witt's collection, and others in the British Museum and in the Dyce Collection at South Kensington. It is, perhaps, less surprising that in those days he should have been paid on the workman's scale for this great work—40s. the square yard—than that in these he should be so little esteemed as the first Englishman who attempted to plant in our soil the seeds of Italian art. It was not so much the fault of the soil that they failed to take root as of the climate. Fifty years later, under more genial conditions, a plentiful crop was raised from the far less robust sowing of Cipriani and Bartolozzi.

In the wide gap between Thornhill and Cipriani may be discerned the solitary figure of **Giles**

Hussey, born, also of an old Dorset family, in 1710. He was something of a mystic, and in his later years he became a religious recluse. He was a pupil of Jonathan Richardson, but went to Italy in 1730, where he spent seven years, and seems to have become more interested in the theory than in the practice of art. His most characteristic drawings are small heads in profile, in fine red chalk, of which Sir Robert Witt has two or three. In Italy he drew the young Pretender, and some of these heads may be portraits; but he was chiefly concerned with the proportions of the human frame, and he is hardly to be classed among the portrait draughtsmen. There is a good notice of him in Hoare's *Wiltshire* (vol. iv, p. 311) to which the following footnote is appended:—

"Mr. [Benjamin] West bought some pencilled heads at Mr. Duane's Sale. On one of these he passed a judgment of such encomium as should not be omitted, saying that he would venture to show it against any head, ancient or modern, and that it was never exceeded, if ever equalled; and that no man had ever imbibed the true Grecian character and art deeper than Giles Hussey."

John Baptist Cipriani, a native of Florence, came to England in 1755, accompanying Sir William Chambers the architect and Joseph Wilton the sculptor on the return from their travels. Being thus introduced into the very centre of the artistic circle, his good birth and his good manners soon procured him a wide recognition. His first employment was to instruct

the students at the school of art instituted by the Duke of Richmond in 1758—Cipriani taught painting and Wilton sculpture. His next was to paint the panels of the new State Coach which inaugurated the reign of George III. He was chosen as one of the original members of the Royal Academy, and was employed by his colleagues to make the design for the diploma given to the Academicians and Associates on their election.

Edwards mentions that a younger son of Cipriani's began the study of painting here, but "not meeting with the employment he wished, he forsook the art and became an officer in the Huntingdon Militia." Of the father, Edwards observes that "his abilities as an artist were very high, particularly as a designer. In the knowledge of the human figure he was pre-eminent, and his example was of great use in correcting the taste of the students at that time in the Academy." Dayes, writing some twenty years earlier, has more to say as to this particular influence, which we find amply justified in much of the drawing of the kind we are considering. "Cipriani has laid the English school under great obligations," he writes, "for the very great assistance afforded by him towards reforming the style of designing the human figure. Previous to the arrival of this elegant Florentine, our artists knew little of the figure, and less of that exquisite ideal excellence so prevalent in his works. He represented Nature as it ought to be, instead of copying the good and bad indiscriminately, from an individual model, which was too much the

practice. . . . We are certainly indebted to Cipriani for opening the door of inquiry after truth in drawing, and for a correctness in marking the extremities, that laid the foundation of that emulation which has gradually advanced the arts to their present state of perfection."

However widely we may differ from Dayes' opinion, we cannot help seeing that Cipriani's influence on the younger generation of artists at this critical period was almost all-pervading. A proof of this is found in the work of the few men, like Blake, Flaxman, or Barry, who did not feel it. To some extent it cannot but be regarded as a good influence, for it sweetened and refined a great deal of the lesser artists' work which without it would very probably not have had enough in it to recommend it at all. It is all very well to disparage sweetness and refinement, but in the minor productions of a school with practically no traditions, but only Hogarth, behind it, they were very acceptable and even necessary ingredients. In the Regency period, when Cipriani's influence began to wear off, in places, we might well wish that his son could have thrown up his commission in the Huntingdon Militia and carried it on a little longer.

We may agree with Dayes, again, that of Cipriani's works, his drawings are by far the best; "and those from fabulous history preferable," he continues, "as his figures possess a certain lightness suiting such subjects; there is a grace and sweetness in his females exquisitely elegant; and the loveliness of his children is unrivalled. . . . His oil pictures (except those

in imitation of basso-relievo) are feeble and gaudy."

Francesco Bartolozzi, Cipriani's compatriot, and his junior by only a few years, is best known as the engraver by whose charming skill the productions of Cipriani and his followers have become so familiar to the public. His drawings are little known, nor are those at the British Museum of any great merit. "As a draughtsman, however," says Dayes, he "stands unrivalled; his taste in the human figure is exquisite, and has, through the medium of the antique, become a pure representation of intellectual perfection. His drawings in black and red chalk are the finest things of the kind; in the collection of Lord Bessborough are two, a Nymph and a Mercury, which do honour to the arts." When Cipriani was making the design for the Orlando Furioso, Dayes adds, he delineated, in a frontispiece, Time turning an urn of medallions into the waters of Oblivion, with the names of great men on them, but introduced a swan carrying one away in his mouth on which he put the name of Bartolozzi. This the elegant mind of the engraver caused him to omit, and to insert that of Cipriani in its place.

For **Angelica Kauffmann** it is hardly possible to say quite so much, and to account for the popularity of her work we shall have to look in any direction but that of intrinsic merit. Not that she was without a considerable amount of natural talent; but for anything of the strength, originality, or breadth of view that are necessary ingredients in the making of a real artist, we may look in vain through the whole catalogue of her

achievements. It was rather to her charming personality, the favour of Royalty, the sympathy excited by her misfortunes, and the skill of Bartolozzi, that she owed her success in captivating, as she undoubtedly did, the admiration of her own and succeeding times.

Familiar as are her designs in Bartolozzi's engravings, there are not many of her drawings in public galleries. At South Kensington there are none, and only a few at the British Museum. Of these may be mentioned a composition in black chalk on grey paper, *Paris being led to Helen by Cupid*, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 15$ inches, a good example of her usual manner; and a small sketch in black chalk on white paper of a lady sitting reading a letter, which, being probably a study from life, is less affected and more charming than her classical pieces. But if the Royal Academy should ever again receive a lady within their august circle, they would have little difficulty nowadays in finding candidates of greater merit than Angelica Kauffmann.

James Hamilton Mortimer, born in 1741, is almost alone among the numerous artists subsequent to the foundation of the Royal Academy in having made his reputation on the strength only of his drawings. As a painter he did practically nothing, and there is hardly any of his work extant other than drawings of figure subjects in fine pen without any colour or wash—in the manner, that is to say, of most of the drawings of the Italian masters. Of these there are a good many to be had, usually mounted on pasteboard within a border; for, as we shall see,

they seem to have been very highly esteemed in his lifetime. Of late years they have become less regarded, having succumbed, it may be supposed, to the more obvious claims of colour and sentiment in combination. But for sheer drawing, irrespective of charm, they certainly stand higher than most English productions; for as Gravelot is reported to have observed to Basire, "de English are very good in der own opinions, but dey do not draw de draw"!

I therefore propose to notice him rather more particularly than if he were still as popular as he was, and begin with Edward Edwards's quaintly phrased paragraph in his *Anecdotes*:—

"Mortimer was born at Eastbourne. His father was the proprietor of a mill and afterwards held a genteel post in the Customs. Young Mortimer discovered a great natural talent for painting. He was therefore placed under the tuition of Mr. Hudson, whose manners not being very conciliating the pupil remained with him but a short time. About this time the Duke of Richmond opened his gallery in Privy Garden and Mr. Mortimer was one of the first who availed themselves of the advantages of that school [where he would come under the influence of Cipriani]. Soon after, he was admitted a member of the private academy in St. Martin's Lane. In these seminaries he acquired very considerable knowledge of the human figures which he drew in a style superior to most of his cotemporaries. When the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, etc., first offered premiums to youths who should produce the best drawings after the

antique figures in the Duke of Richmond's gallery and also from the life, Mr. Mortimer was among the earliest candidates and obtained several premiums with great applause.

"In 1763, when the same respectable Society offered rewards to those who should produce the best historical painting, our young artist became a candidate and obtained the second premium of fifty guineas. The subject was Edward the Confessor stripping his Mother of her Effects. In the following year he obtained the first prize, one hundred guineas. The subject was St. Paul preaching to the Britons, and after his death the picture was placed in the Church at High Wycombe, where his remains were deposited. . . . His favourite subjects were the representations of Banditti or of those transactions recorded in history wherein the exertions of soldiers are principally employed, as also incantations, the frolics of monsters, and all those kind of scenes that personify 'horrible imaginings.'

"In reflecting on the life of this gentleman it is not easy to restrain the tear of regret which must follow the consideration, how such abilities were sacrificed to the mean pursuits of inelegant pleasures and ignoble emulations. To be superior as a cricket-player or to command on a loose frolic, were to him 'worth ambition.' Owing to this neglect, his improvement in art was not equal to the just expectation and wishes of his friends. . . ."

Of his intemperate habits an anecdote is related by J. T. Smith in *Nollekens and his Times*, which shows how highly his drawing

was esteemed: "Mr. Richard Payne Knight happening to call upon Mr. Mortimer at his house in Church Court, Covent Garden, expressed his uneasiness at the melancholy mood in which he found him. 'Why, Sir,' observed Mortimer, 'I have many noble and generous friends, it is true; but of all my patrons I do not know one whom I could now ask to purchase one hundred guineas worth of drawings, and I am at this moment seriously in want of that sum.' 'Well, then,' observed Mr. Knight, 'bring as many sketches as you would part with for that sum to me to-morrow, and dine with me.' This he did and enjoyed his bottle. Mr. Knight gave him two hundred guineas, which he insisted the drawings were worth, and on this splendid reception Mortimer took so much wine that the next morning he knew not how he got home. At about twelve o'clock at noon his bedside was visited by the late 'Memory' Cooke, who after hearing him curse his stupidity in losing his two hundred guineas, produced the bag. 'Here, my good fellow,' cried Cooke, 'here is your money. Fortunately you knocked me up and emptied your pockets on my table after which I procured a coach and sent you home.'"

Payne Knight presented some of these drawings to the British Museum, and the late John Henderson bequeathed many more. Altogether there are over sixty in the catalogue.

None of the drawings I have seen by **William Hamilton**—and they are not uncommon—incline me to differ from Dayes, who sums him up thus: "This Proteus among artists changed his manner

of painting almost as often as he changed his dress; as at one period he was all for Fuseli, then Lawrence, Westall and others; but with all his alterations he seldom attained to a higher style than the pretty—he appears not to have had the least idea of dignity in his compositions; and for the attire of his figures he seems to have applied to the stage, which led him into tawdriness; indeed, the whole taste of his designs tends so much to the theatrical, that his women look like opera dolls, he drew very indifferently; the legs and thighs of some of his figures are at least two-thirds of their height, which gives them a most awkward appearance. . . ." I quote this rather as a warning to beginners not to be too sure of a supposed Fuseli drawing rather than in disparagement of his work as a whole. For Dayes admits that he has seen some of his drawings of friezes of sportive figures that possessed considerable merit, "accompanied with exquisite taste in the females"; and some of his engraved work is undeniably attractive. As for the prices his drawings commanded, we have evidence which cannot be disputed, however incredible it sounds, in the letter quoted at the end of this volume.

The fame of **Richard Cosway** as a miniaturist would seem to entitle him to a better place than among the small men; but apart from his skill in rendering beauty in terms of beauty, there is really very little to be said about him. Of grace and elegance there is abundance in his drawings, but of vigour or breadth very little. At the same time there is enough delicacy,

precision, and deftness in his work to raise it above common prettiness, and a collector may well overlook the absence of the highest qualities in sketches or studies from so faultless a master of miniature painting.

Joseph Nollekens, the sculptor, better known in these days as the subject of J. T. Smith's entertaining volumes, *Nollekens and his Times* than for his sculpture, contributed only in a small way to our subject. "Whenever he was not engaged in modelling," says Smith, "he employed himself, particularly in the evening, in making designs, upon the backs of letters and other scraps of paper, for every description of monument of the simple kind, such as a female weeping or entwining festoons of flowers over an urn, or a child with an inverted torch; and for one and the same monument I have known him make half a dozen or more trials. These sketches were often in pencil or sometimes finished in indian ink, but many of his later ones were drawn only with charcoal."

I have a chalk sketch of his which, although on the back of a letter, hardly appears to fall into this category, being a simple group, apparently from the life, of two of his models on a sofa. It is a good straightforward drawing, in outline; and the fortunate circumstance of his name being on the back of it gives it an importance as a possible clue to other unrecognised work of his hand.

Francis Wheatley, born in London in 1747, is still a popular favourite with collectors of prints, his series of *London Cries* commanding

fabulous prices, and even modern imitations of them, hardly to be dignified by the name of reproductions being greatly in demand. In spite of being over-sentimental, his work is of quite a high class, and both as a painter and as a draughtsman he takes a good place among his contemporaries. He is well represented at South Kensington ; in landscape with scenes in Ireland, Devon, and Cumberland ; in *genre* with the dreadfully sentimental *Dismissal* and *Reconciliation* ; and in figure subjects, *Interior of the Shakespeare Gallery* and *The Dublin Volunteers*, both of which contain numerous portraits. The sketch for *The Haymakers* I reproduce not so much for its effectiveness as an illustration (for it is very slight) as for the coincidence of the engraving of the same subject being reproduced in *Chats on Old Prints*. Those who have that volume may be interested to compare the two, and notice the very slight differences in composition. I may add that I bought this drawing, for a shilling or two, many years ago, and had not identified it when the other volume was given me as a model upon which to compile this one.

The contrast between **John Flaxman** and Cipriani, who, as I have shown, may be regarded as the founder of the classical or romantic school in England, and was responsible for inculcating his pupils with ideas that had never before obtained in this country, could hardly be sharper. Cipriani's classicalism was so suave as to allure many followers ; Flaxman's so severe as possibly to repel anyone from following him—for certainly nobody did. Cipriani's was imbibed in exceedingly

JAMES WARD.

SKETCH OF A CRADLE, ETC.

FRANCIS WHEATLEY.

THE HAYMAKERS.

To face p. 188.

weak solution, in the enervating atmosphere of the eighteenth-century Florence; Flaxman's born anew in the invigorating climate of Yorkshire. For Cipriani, the lovely Helen was little more than an elegant arrangement of drapery; while to Flaxman, Hector and Achilles were naked, angular, living heroes. Like Abraham Lincoln in the bath-room.

That Flaxman's drawings are not more generally known and appreciated may be assigned to more than one very good cause; and while placing him among the foremost men who have permanently contributed to the history of British art, we must not forget that it is not as a painter that he excelled, but as a sculptor, and that his principal contribution to the arts was in designing and decorating Wedgwood pottery. For the most part, accordingly, his drawings are not drawings in the sense of studies or sketches for pictures; they are simply designs. That is to say, they lack the interest or charm excited by the first rough expression of an artist's idea of a portrait, a landscape, or a subject picture. They are not in any sense pictorial; and the severity of their ideal only intensifies this difference from what is usually expected of an artist's drawing.

To this, of course, there are exceptions, such as the drawings he made in Rome for the illustration of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—no less than seventy-three in number—and the sketches of the life and scenery he saw around him. In 1796, again, he made forty illustrations for a poem he had composed, entitled "The Knight

of the Blazing Cross," which he gave to his wife on her birthday in lieu of a portrait of Stothard, as was his annual custom. These are in the FitzWilliam Museum at Cambridge.

The truth is, the English really cared very little about Greek art in Flaxman's time, and care still less about it now. They made a popular favourite of Romney as a portrait painter, but of his classical studies, of which he was fondest, nobody ever took any notice. They had filled their houses with Dutch and Italian pictures and Chinese porcelain, and the cult of the antique never extended beyond the limits of classical scholarship.

Turning now to **Henry Fuseli,** who, like Flaxman, was passionately devoted to the classics when still a schoolboy, let us see the different effects worked in him by subsequent developments. For while Flaxman never forsook the strictly classical idea, in Fuseli it was modified by an equally strong feeling for the work of Michelangelo—and of Shakespeare. This was long before he had been in England—or even in Rome. Born in Switzerland in 1741, he was sent to college at Zurich, where he made the acquaintance of Lavater, to whom he was indebted for his introduction to English literature and English people. At Berlin the British Ambassador was so pleased with his translations and drawings from *Macbeth* and *Lear*, that he advised him to visit England, where he arrived in 1763.

At this date, it will be remembered, Cipriani had already been eight years in England—and

JAMES BARRY.

PHILOCTETES WOUNDED.

JOHN FLAXMAN.

CLASSICAL GROUP.

(Both in the collection of A. P. Oppé, Esq.)

To face p. 190.

Fuseli was still a very young man. But the reception he met with encouraged him to stay there. "How long have you studied in Italy?" said Sir Joshua Reynolds to him, after examining the drawings which Fuseli submitted to him. "I never studied in Italy," was the reply. "Do you think I should study in Italy? And above all, is it worth while?"

"Young man," said Reynolds, "were I the author of these drawings, and were offered ten thousand a year *not* to practise as an artist, I would reject the proposal with contempt."

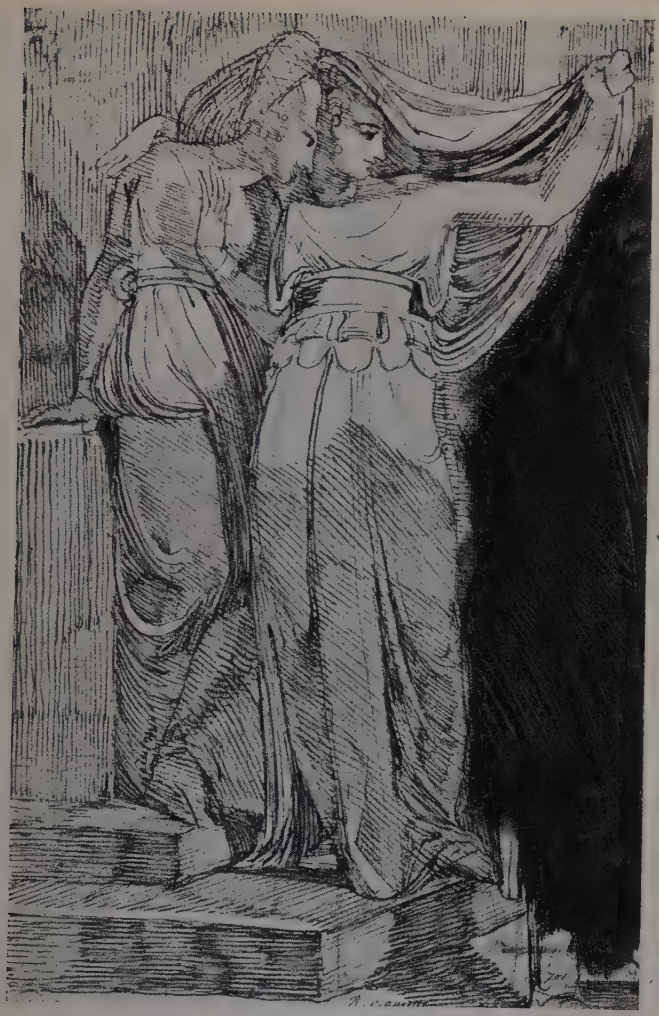
But a favourable reception is not the only ingredient in success, and in 1770 Fuseli went to Rome to study, and stayed there for nine years, studying the works of Michelangelo with extraordinary fervour. So far did he carry his enthusiasm for the master, that he would lie on his back day after day gazing at the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, till the effect produced on his drawings induced Piranesi to tell him that he was "not designing, but building a man." Whether this was intended for the highest praise or friendly censure, a couple of drawings of this period in the Dyce Collection at South Kensington enable us to judge for ourselves what manner of work he was becoming capable of. Both are dated 1777. One is a large pen and sepia sketch of *Saul and the Witch of Endor,* almost grotesque in its intensity. The kneeling figure of the witch, her back towards the spectator, her left arm extended, and her head turned sharply to the right, is, in Piranesi's phrase, built rather than designed. On the right is Saul, falling

back straight and rigid into the arms of his servants, while on the left the apparition of Samuel, in profile, completes the terrific presentment of the weird scene. Terrific it really is, though to a stranger to Fuseli's manner, its very originality and its intense force, would at first sight make it seem grotesque.

This, indeed, is characteristic of most of Fuseli's drawings. They are so original, so forceful, so unlike anyone else's conception of a subject, that they often appear to border on eccentricity. And as a Chinaman in his majestic raiment is apt to excite the merriment rather than the admiration of Londoners who are only accustomed to the conventional banalities of everyday English costume, so Fuseli's violent individuality has seldom been taken quite seriously by the British public or even the British connoisseurs.

It is true, besides, that Fuseli did not take himself over seriously. He was the most genial and eccentric of men, foaming and raging with anyone who disagreed with him, but always ending in a joke which was usually at his own expense. "Sophia, my love," he said to his over-jealous wife, "Why don't you swear? You don't know how much it would ease your mind." Of all Cunningham's *Lives of the Painters*, that of Fuseli is fullest of amusing personal anecdote.

The other drawing (No. 781 in the Dyce Collection—where it is wrongly catalogued as being dated Roma, May 1787, instead of 1777) is equally characteristic of the other extreme in Fuseli's subjects—the charming rendering of the figures of women in extraordinary clothes. In



HENRY FUSELI.

TWO WOMEN.

(*Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

To face p. 192.

this example, which is executed with a thick reed pen and bistre, two females are standing on the steps to a pedestal. Both faces are in profile, but the contrast between the treatment of the two constitutes much of the charm of the drawing. The faces are almost Egyptian in type. One is surmounted by a curious headdress, the other, at a higher angle, is relieved by a shawl thrown over the head and extended by the left arm.

Now, without there being anything eccentric or grotesque about this composition, there is behind it a mind so purely original that it could never be taken for the work of anyone but Fuseli; a mind, at the same time, so gifted that a slight sketch of as common a subject as could well be named, is by it raised to the rank of something permanently valuable to any student of how to do things or how things are done. There is nothing exceptionally wonderful about it, nor do I dwell on it for the sake of extolling its excellencies, but only for the purpose of showing the vast difference between the finished work of minor artists such as we have just left, and the free expression of the ideas of the really greater men. That Fuseli is the only artist mentioned in this chapter who painted a picture thought worthy of being included in the national collection is no proof of his superiority to one and all of them—it is only an indication; the handling of a simple composition like this is the proof.

Realism was, of course, impossible to him. Everything he touched was fired, often into

distortion by his intense passion, his frenzied imagination. In another of the drawings at South Kensington, in water-colour, catalogued as *A Spirit in the form of a Beautiful Maiden Rising before an Aged Couple* (Dyce, 782), this is well illustrated. There is another figure in the foreground, that of a girl crouching down as if under the rebuke of the stern old parents, and the idea seems to be that it is *her* spirit which is appearing before their astonished gaze —a spirit of loveliness, but not unmixed with a suggestion of what might possibly have been the cause of the rebuke. The old man is sitting stern and unmoved—the woman's upturned gaze is fixed on the lovely phantom with an expression of horror and amazement, yet mixed as it were, with an uncontrollable betrayal of admiration and fascination. Whether I have interpreted the allegory aright, I must leave it to others to decide.

I suggested above that a proof of Cipriani's influence might be found in the work of Fuseli, and others who did not come under it. In this connection the observations of Dayes on Fuseli, are instructive as well as amusing. "All the benefit resulting from the fine taste of Cipriani," he writes, "has been in a great degree rendered nugatory by the wild effusions of the perturbed imagination of this native of Zurich ; and one of the most severe reflections on the understanding of would-be connoisseurs is the taking this man's *chimeras dire* for efforts of the sublime : they have always appeared to me more like the dreams of a lunatic than the production of a sound mind."

And much more to the same effect, concluding with the following, which is too good to omit: "General Vernon said that when he was some years ago returning from Italy through Switzerland, he was struck with certain odd scramblings of figures on the walls of the inns, and traced them all the way to England; and that when he some time afterwards arrived in London, he knew the man by the same extravagancies in his pictures."

The drawings of **William Blake** are of a character and a quality that make it difficult to speak of them as merely items in the product of English draughtsmen. They are something almost apart in technique, and quite apart in feeling. Their peculiar beauty and their mystical conception are as different from the qualities found in an ordinary English drawing as are the peculiarities of the Chinese and Japanese artists —I mean, of course, in reality, not in degree. In other words, a drawing by Blake would strike an ordinary lover of Morland or Gainsborough as rather ridiculous, until he acquired some knowledge of the man and his ideals.

In his own time Blake was regarded as a madman, but there were those who prophesied that his drawings would one day be prized—and priced—as highly as those of Michelangelo; and that day has already dawned. At the Linnell sale a few years ago, when the whole of his designs for the illustration of *Dante* were put up for auction, an official "knock out" was formed between the National Gallery, the FitzWilliam Museum at Cambridge, and the Melbourne Art

Gallery, not to bid against each other, but to divide the spoils between them.

It is therefore safe to say that the chances of discovering a genuine Blake drawing at a moderate price are exceedingly remote. On the other hand, one often comes across drawings with his signature or an ascription to him; and these are generally worth having, because they are nearly always by either Romney, Flaxman, Stothard, or Fuseli. But they are not Blake's. For the enjoyment of the study of Blake in the original one must go to the galleries. But Mr. Laurence Binyon's *Studio* volume on Blake, recently published, with nearly a hundred reproductions of the finest examples, many of them from private collections, is a still better guide to the enjoyment and understanding of the man and his work. Another volume, *The Letters of Blake*, edited by Mr. A. G. B. Russell, together with a transcript of his *Life*, written by his friend Butts, should also be studied, as well as the older and well-known *Life* by Gilchrist.

There is one document which I should like to see reprinted in its original form, namely, "A descriptive Catalogue of Pictures, poetical and historical inventions, painted by William Blake in water-colour, being the ancient method of fresco painting restored; and Drawings, for public inspection and for sale by private contract, London, 1809." For in this, Blake gives vent to some of his peculiar ideas, acquaintance with which is helpful, if not sometimes necessary, for an understanding and appreciation of the works which they concern. Thus, in a note to a

drawing for *The Bard*, he writes: "Weaving the winding sheet of Edward's race by means of sounds of spiritual music and its accompanying expressions of articulate speech, is a bold and daring and masterly concept that the public have embraced and approved with avidity. Poetry consists in these conceptions, and shall Painting be confined to the sordid drudgery of facsimile representations of merely mortal and perishing substances, and not be as poetry and music are? No, it shall not be so! Painting as well as poetry and music exists and exults in immortal thoughts."

In his criticism on the works of others, Blake could be very human, however. "The scene of Mr. Stothard's picture," he writes about *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, "is by Dulwich Hills, which was not the way to Canterbury; but perhaps the painter thought he would give them a ride round about, because they were a burlesque set of scarecrows not worth any man's respect or care." In a letter to Cumberland, again, on his failure to please a reverend patron, he ends: "However, I am sorry that a man should be so enamoured of Rowlandson's caricatures as to call them copies from life and manners, or fit things for a clergyman to write upon." For the reassurance of readers of the present volume, I may add that he said worse things about Rubens and Titian.

VIII

BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER VIII

BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS

As a sequel to the foregoing chapter it may be noticed the drawings of this class which, though belonging as to subject to almost all of the previous chapters, are nevertheless somewhat different in character, owing to the fact that they were produced for a special purpose. For the most part, the only examples that have come down to us are the finished work ready for the engraver; and while these have the peculiar interest to the collector of being comparable with the engravings, they have little of the freshness and spirit that is so valuable in the first sketches or studies of an artist.

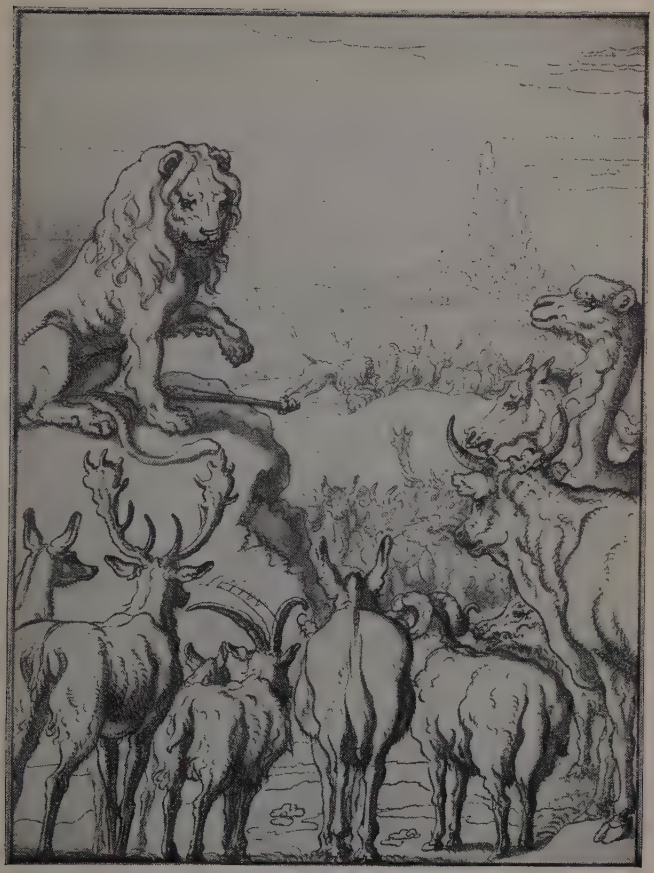
A complete account, or even catalogue, of illustrations in English books of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has not as yet been attempted, so far as I am aware. Nor do I propose in the present chapter to mention generally more than a very few which are, perhaps, of more than ordinary interest to our subject, and are not so well known as others. But it should be borne in mind that practically every plate in a book was preceded by at least one drawing and probably more, and that the study of illustrated

books is a very necessary accompaniment to the study of drawings, and not less so to the attribution of them to their right authors.

In 1652, only three years from the execution of Charles I., was published *Theophila*, a poem by Benlowes, in which were two plates designed and engraved by **Francis Barlow**. He is better known as the delineator of birds and beasts, and many of his drawings for subsequent publications are in existence. In 1658 he contributed eighteen plates, engraved by Hollar, for a book called *Multæ et diversæ Avium species*. This was republished more than once, some of the plates being engraved by Francis Place. In 1660 he did two plates for Stapylton's translation of Juvenal.

But his greatest work was the illustration of *Æsop's Fables*, published in 1666, with over a hundred plates. Nearly all the drawings for these plates are in the British Museum and form one of the most interesting and fascinating items in the whole catalogue. They are done for the most part with a pen and bistre and washed slightly with sepia or indian ink. They are all much about the same size, 4×5 inches. Birds and beasts are naturally the principal figures in them, but it is interesting to find in their backgrounds glimpses of English life and surroundings of so early a period so well and so naturally delineated.

Facing p. 202 is from a drawing which I bought out of another series, of more than twice the size of the former drawings, for the illustration of the story of *Androcles and the Lion*



FRANCIS BARLOW.

THE LION, KING OF THE BEASTS.

To face p. 202.

In 1671 Barlow contributed fourteen illustrations to *Several Ways of Hawking, Hunting, and Fishing.* I have only come across one of the drawings for these—as I suppose—and I do not know where it is now. Barlow's style is quite unmistakable, and his drawings are always worth buying, as well for their simple, straightforward quality as for being almost the only examples of a period when there was supposed to be no British art at all. He died in 1702.

William Faithorne, the elder, famous as an engraver of portrait heads, may be numbered among the very earliest illustrators of books in this country. It is possible, also, that some of his portrait drawings, of which Walpole mentions two or three, may still be in existence. He worked under Sir Robert Peake, printseller and engraver, says Walpole, for three or four years before the eruption of the Civil War, and whom he accompanied into the king's service, and was made prisoner at Basingstoke. Refusing to take the oaths to Cromwell, he retired to France, but returned to England soon afterwards. In 1655 was published David Whitford's Latin translation of *Museus,* to which Faithorne contributed two illustrations. These are signed, "W. Faithorne, *fecit,*" which means, it may be supposed, that he designed and drew as well as engraved them. They represent the first meeting of Hero with Leander in the temple, and Hero throwing herself from her tower on the body of Leander washed ashore. Walpole also mentions, as by Faithorne, "the Four Evangelists and several historic prints, some in the style of

Goltzius, others of Hollar ; and the Annunciation in his own manner, very good," in Taylor's *Life of Christ.* Also six cuts in the English edition of *Sleiden's History of the Reformation in Germany.*

In 1711 was published a small thin folio, entitled *The Cryes of the City of London drawne after the Life,* which had a great vogue. It is usually known as *Tempest's London Cries,* the plates having been printed and the volume published by Pierce Tempest. The plates were all drawn by Marcellus Laroon, generally called **Old Laroon,** to distinguish him from his son of the same name, mentioned in our second chapter, called Captain Laroon.

I have only seen one drawing by Old Laroon, and the engraving of these *Cryes*—nine years after their author's death—does not suggest that they followed the drawings closely or skilfully enough to give more than a bare clue to his style. But it is probable that there are drawings of his still in existence—possibly attributed to Hogarth or others—and for that reason the book deserves mention here. The one above mentioned was not of an English scene, and but for its attribution (to the younger Laroon, by the by) and its fairly obvious resemblance to the somewhat loose and sloppy style of the figures in the *Cryes,* I should not have noticed it.

John Wootton was a painter, chiefly of horses and hunting subjects ; but he did a series of illustrations, which were engraved by Vandergucht for the first of Gay's Fables, published in 1727. Only one of the drawings for these is in the British

JOHN VANDERBANK.

DON QUIXOTE.

To face p. 204.

Museum, and it falls far short of the fine draughtsmanship displayed in a sheet of pen outline studies of horses and hounds in the same collection, a really first-rate example of what drawing ought to be. Unfortunately, it is just these slight studies or sketches that are neglected or destroyed, and we are often left to judge a man's work by some far less valuable drawing, just because it is of a subject or an incident as a whole, done perhaps for a patron or a friend. As for book illustration, it is hardly a painter's work, and it is not to be expected that in his drawings made on a small scale for the engraver, he should find his full free expression. In other book illustrations, too, I have been inclined to suppose that the engraver regarded a drawing rather as material on which to base an exhibition of his skill, and not merely to reproduce.

John Vanderbank, the portrait painter, illustrated *Don Quixote,* and I have one of his designs for the frontispiece, as I suppose—a drawing in pen and sepia, about 10 × 8 inches, showing the hero standing at full length, with one hand on a book on a table and the other extended towards a trophy of arms hanging on the wall. The published frontispiece (to Book I, Chapter I of the English translation, published in 1738–42) is of the same subject, but Don Quixote is seated.

A little better than these, perhaps because it is about half the size, is the frontispiece for *The Magazine of Magazines*; but even here the drawing is sadly inferior to the subject, which is an author seated at a table awaiting inspiration,

Mercury supplying it to him in the shape of an armful of books, and Minerva in the background pointing to the title of the new venture.

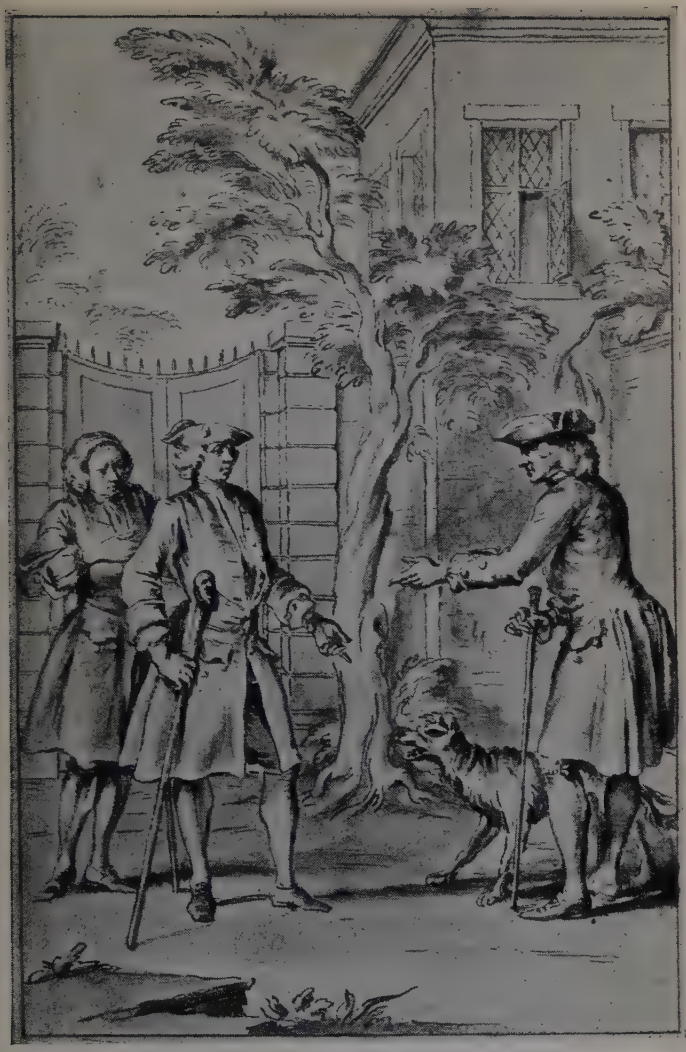
The whole of the drawings for these illustrations, including several alternative designs, are at the British Museum.

Another book illustrated by Vanderbank is a thin quarto, published in 1729, entitled *Twenty-five Actions of the Manage Horse.*

Francis Hayman, also, contributed twenty-eight illustrations, which were engraved by Charles Grignon, to Smollett's edition of *Don Quixote,* published in 1755. These, in pen in indian ink and sepia wash, are in the British Museum. They vary in size, most of them being about 10 × 8 inches. It must be admitted that they compare very poorly with the work of Gravelot, and are chiefly interesting as showing the poverty of the English school at this period both in practice and tradition as compared with the French, particularly in the drawing of the figures. In facial expression Hayman is a little more successful, perhaps from the example of his friend Hogarth.

I have, by the by, a small drawing in sepia for the pack-saddle incident in *Don Quixote* which I am not quite certain about. It seems to be of about Hayman's period, but I think it is rather better than his.

The drawings for Hogarth's illustrations to Don Quixote are not, as far as I am aware, in existence. I have only seen a series of small oil paintings of them which, as far as I



HUBERT GRAVELOT.

THE SQUIRE AND HIS CUR.

(*British Museum.*)

To face p. 206.

remember, were hardly good enough to be the originals.

Hubert Gravelot is a name best known through his illustrations in books, though these were not by any means his only output. He was born in Paris in 1699, and came to England about 1732, where he remained, except for one short interval, till 1755. It is a thousand pities that he did not stay longer, instead of leaving his "engrafting the grace of the Watteau tradition on the English style" to be overswept by the flood of Italian sentimentality which followed the arrival of Cipriani. Gainsborough is said to have profited by his instruction in drawing, as well as the elder Charles Grignon, and in some of the portrait studies of the former some traces of the style of Gravelot are perhaps discernible. Gravelot and Grignon both made drawings for a series of studies of men and women, which were etched, and published in 1744. Four of these are in the British Museum, three by Gravelot and one by Grignon; half a dozen more—of Grignon's—I was fortunate enough to discover, thirty years ago, in a carpenter's shop in Nottingham, which I purchased for a few shillings apiece. The published etchings are charming enough, as well as of the greatest interest in showing us the costume of the period in figures that have nothing of the fashion plate about them. But the drawings, done in black and white chalk on grey or drab paper have a freedom and elegance which is perfectly fascinating. Being drawn from the life, in easy and unconventional poses, they have many

of the qualities of portrait studies; but as they were designed for translation into etching, they are far more finished, though without losing any of their ease and freedom. Before I had seen the etchings I imagined that they must be portraits of actors and actresses, so varied and free are the attitudes.

Samuel Shelley, well known as a miniaturist and as the painter of fancy subjects in water-colour, appears to have devoted a great deal of his time to designing illustrations for poetical works. At South Kensington are six or seven of his sketch-books—dated, occasionally, 1786 and 1788—filled with rough notes both for portraits —chiefly fanciful and allegorical treatments of women and children—and for subjects from Tasso, Shakespeare, and other poets. An armorial bookplate in one of the volumes shows him to have been, or claimed to be, of the same family as his illustrious namesake; though snatches of verse, presumably his own, with which the books are sprinkled, hardly strengthen the supposition. For example :—

> "O'erwhelm'd with sleep she silent sunk
> And half disrob'd—fast by the glimmering lamp
> She silent lay."

> "At the sound of her voice Sorrow lifts up his head
> And Poverty listens well pleased from her shed."

His finished drawings do him more credit, as without rising to very great heights they are pleasant and charming. *Time and Memory*, in the galleries at South Kensington, is perhaps the best known. I have a very charming sketch of

SAMUEL SHELLEY.

MOTHER AND CHILD.

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this subject, fully coloured, but smaller and less finished.

Richard Westall, born in 1765, was a painter of historical subjects, but is best known for his illustrations of the *Arabian Nights* and of Shakespeare and several other English poets. Three illustrations for Beckford's *Vathek* are in the Dyce Collection at South Kensington, together with several other subject drawings; also six, in pencil, for Milton's *Paradise Lost* and one for Cowper's *The Dog and the Water-lily*.

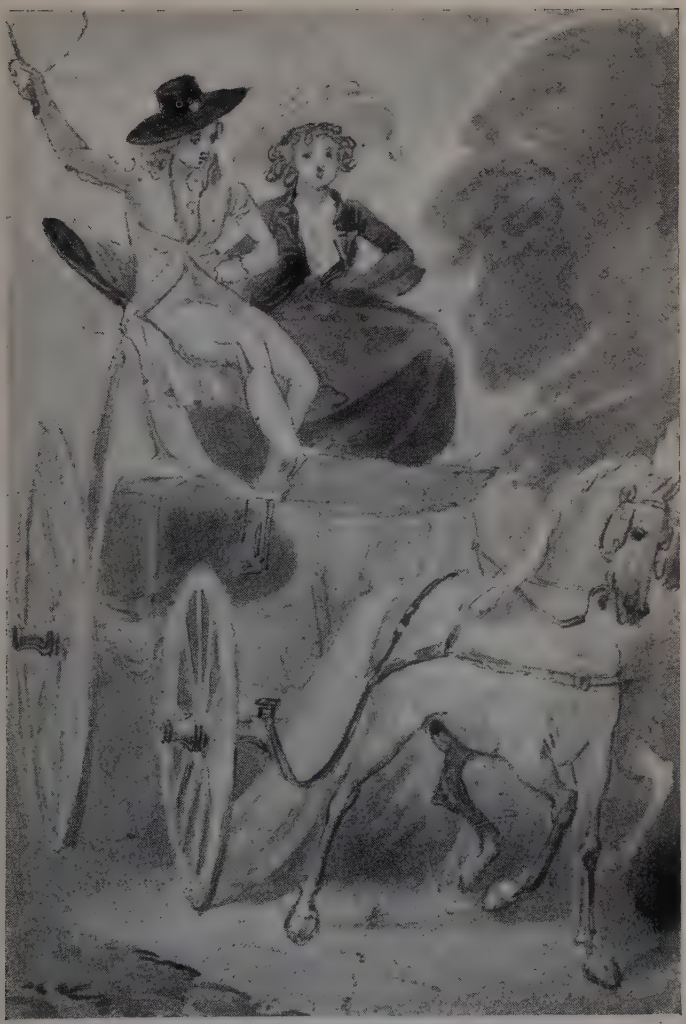
Two of our foremost topographical draughtsmen are found in the ranks of the book illustrators, namely, Michael Angelo Rooker and Edward Dayes. By the former are six little drawings, about 5 × 3 inches, at South Kensington, for illustrations of *Tom Jones, Amelia,* and other works of Henry Fielding, each signed and dated 1780. Mr. Thomas Girtin has one of the frontispieces.

Some of J. H. Mortimer's drawings for Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are at South Kensington, and some for Bell's edition of the *English Poets* are there, and others in the Nottingham Art Gallery. I have one of a larger size thus endorsed by Samuel Shelley: "Nature, leaning on the Sarcophagus of Shakespeare, crowns Genius with Laurel, for guarding her most exquisite fruits (placed on an altar decorated with theatrical emblems) from the Rapaciousness of the Harpies, of Envy, &c., &c.—Frontispiece to Lloyd's Epistle to D^d^. Garrick Esq.; done by J. Mortimer Esq. S. Shelley. Feby. 12. 73."

It would seem that almost every artist "had

a go" at book illustration at some time or other, and a complete catalogue, especially if judiciously illustrated, would make a very interesting volume. But with all these artists it was merely occasional, in the nature of "by-work"; we now come to one who may be called the book illustrator *par excellence*, for it was above all things his chief product.

Thomas Stothard, born in London in 1755, of Yorkshire parents, is less regarded nowadays than he deserves; though possibly this is but a natural reaction from the adulation showered upon him by our grandparents, culminating in a *Life, with Personal Reminiscences*, by Mrs. Bray, published in 1851. "For imagination," this lady styles him—she might more truthfully have said, in her own imagination—"the greatest painter which this or any other country ever produced." With his paintings we are not here concerned; nor would it be possible to give more than a general idea of the nature of his sketches and designs, of which we are told the number exceeded ten thousand. For the most part these are very slight, in pencil or wash; and we may agree with Leslie, whose estimate was more sober than that of Mrs. Bray, that it is in his smallest pictures and drawings only that we feel there is nothing more to be desired. "For more than half a century," said Leslie, in a lecture delivered shortly after Stothard's death in 1834, "this great ornament of our school was engaged in illustrating not only the contemporary literature of his country, but the work of her best poets, from the time of Chaucer to his own; his employers, with the exception



THOMAS STOTHARD.

THE CHARIOT.

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occasionally of the goldsmiths, being the booksellers. By these he was engaged in every species of composition, from illustrations of Homer and Shakespeare to designs for spelling books and pocket almanacs, fashions for the *Ladies' Magazine*, portraits of popular actors and actresses in character, as well as other subjects of the day, such as balls at St. James's, the employments of the Royal Family, the King going out with the foxhounds, etc. Numbers of his early designs are from novels and poems the very names of which are now only preserved in his beautiful art. By the goldsmiths he was employed in designing ornaments for plate, from the Wellington Shield to spoon handles for George the Fourth."

From all this it may easily be understood that drawings by Stothard, especially slight pencil sketches, are not at all difficult to come by, but also that, however slight they may be, they are none the less characteristic of an artist who, though certainly not in any sense great, was still high above most of the producers of elegancies and sentimentalities, and who was the intimate friend of Blake and Flaxman.

Being chiefly an illustrator of books, Stothard was a persistent and continuous draughtsman of anything that was likely to be of use to him in that capacity. We may therefore expect to find drawings of his that come under the headings of our former chapters on Landscape, on the Countryside, and on Life and Manners.

Of landscape he was by no means neglectful in his early days. Mrs. Bray relates that " Whilst

yet a very young man, as soon as the Academy closed, Stothard would make his way into Worcestershire and thence start off on a pony through Wales. . . . These early sketches were retained by him for many years, being kept, apart from others, in a portfolio in his painting room. One winter's morning (when he lived in Newman Street) he came rather unexpectedly into his room, when he found an Irish housemaid engaged in lighting his fire with the contents of his portfolio of North Wales! His vexation and surprise may well be conceived, but the damsel very civilly excused herself by telling him she thought they were waste papers. 'Woman!' exclaimed Stothard, 'you are the greatest incendiary I ever knew in all my life; you have burnt Conway and Carmarthen Castles and the whole town of Bangor.'" Another incident, of about the same date, is equally reminiscent of recent events in these days. Stothard and Blake took a boat up the Medway and landed to make sketches, when they were arrested on suspicion of being French spies, and sentries placed beside the tent they had improvised until their innocence was established. Stothard made a pen-and-ink drawing of this incident, which he afterwards etched. The drawing was purchased at the sale at Christie's in 1834 by Mr. William Sharpe, of Highbury. The etching may be seen in the British Museum. It was for long attributed to Blake.

Late in his career, again, Stothard made a special tour in Dove Dale for the purpose of making landscape drawings for a new edition of

The Compleat Angler. He was then seventy years old. Busy as Stothard was, the vogue for illustrated books, generally of a small size, found similar employment for several other very skilful artists, such as Edward Burney, Corbould, and Smirke. Francis Wheatley and others also contributed to the immense bulk of small illustrations of this period, and the first edition of Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* is famous for its plates drawn and etched by William Blake. More than these it is hardly necessary in the present volume to mention, but as an appendix to this last chapter I may quote the following letter—among the manuscripts at the British Museum (Egerton, 2679, E. 2)—to a collector of what are now old English drawings over a century ago.

"Mr. Du Roveray's compts. to Mr. Baker, and is willing to let him have the two frames in his possession of drawings from Chaucer, though having three frames of the same description, i.e. of drawings from Bell's poets, he would much rather dispose of the whole together. The two in question contain four Drawings each, by Stothard and Mortimer; the lowest price of which will be Eight Guineas, at the rate of a guinea a Drawing, as already mentioned to Mr. B. Though Mr. D. certainly paid less for them, Mr. B. cannot take it amiss if he refuse to part with them under what he considers to be their value: indeed, they are probably worth more, one of the artists being dead and the other (Stothard) declining at present to sell *Drawings* at all.

"With respect to the portraits done for him by Burney, Mr. D. has eight in all; viz. a Head of Glover, one of Gray, one of Goldsmith, one of Thomson, one of Milton, one of Pope, and two of Homer: one of the latter is now engraving by Mr. Ryder, and cannot, therefore be had till the plate is completed. Taking the whole, Mr. D. could let them go for Ten Guineas, though they cost him *Eighteen*: any separate head would be Two Guineas. They are all in water-colour, and in perfect preservation.

"Mr. D. would have no objection to sell a few of the larger Drawings, done for him by the late Mr. Hamilton (to make room for others) taking together all that belong to one work: for instance the 6 from Paradise Lost might be had for 100 guineas; five from Thomson and 1 from Gray (the Ploughman, a companion to the Reaper) for the same price; the 6 from Goldsmith (3 by Hamilton and 3 by Wheatley) for 90 guineas; and the 2 remaining ones from Gray, the Birth of Shakespeare and the Ode to Spring, for 40. As to Westall's, they would come much higher, Mr. D. having paid him as much as 45 gs. for one of the Drawings for the Iliad; the two last he has done for Mr. D.'s work have been the same size as Hamilton's the price of which has been 25 gs. each.

"If Mr. B. will favour him with a call, he will find Mr. D. generally at home till twelve in the forenoon, and of a Sunday till One.

"Mr. D. has several of the Drawings done for Bell's British Theatre, and among the number one by Smirke never engraved and one by Westall.

"GEO. BAKER, ESQ."

NEW STREET,
BISHOPSGATE,
22nd Jay. 1806.

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